

A photograph of a tunnel with a bright light at the end, symbolizing hope and freedom. The tunnel's interior is dark, with the walls and ceiling made of rough, textured material. The light at the end creates a strong lens flare effect, illuminating the tunnel's interior. The overall mood is one of optimism and a bright future.

A Vision of Liberty

America After Government

For ten thousand years, governments have denied every person's basic right to own and operate his own life - resulting in distortion, mayhem, destruction, misery and death; in the 20th Century alone they murdered 262 million people supposedly under their "protection."

Gradually Americans learned how to manage without them, and one day the last remaining government employee walked out of his office and turned out the light. Then began the most thrilling experiment in human history: FREEDOM!



Time-traveler **Jim Davies** reports for us in A Vision of Liberty how the new era progressed in its first three years. Jim was raised in England and has a Master's from Cambridge, as a member of the college where Sir Isaac Newton found how gravity works, where Lord Acton taught that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Advance Praise for "A Vision of Liberty":

Utterly wonderful. Thank you for this. It's just the kind of inspiration so lacking in libertarian literature.

Brian Nickerson

Jim nailed it. This is what life in freedom would be like.

Anthony I S Alexander, collaborator in the creation of the Tannehills' classic, The Market for Liberty.

'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' - Jim has removed that danger.

Per Bylund, founder, anarchism.net

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Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed. I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break in pieces.

Etienne de la Boëtie, 1553.

Acknowledgments

This book would not have appeared without the inspiration and brilliant clarity of thought of Anthony I S Alexander, a true Renaissance Man of the 20th and early 21st Centuries, whom it has been my high privilege to know and whose real name will, I hope, one day be revealed.

The errors and shortfalls here are, of course, my own.

Dedication

To my grandchildren - who will discover how much easier it is to forecast the past than the future, but who will live in freedom for most of their adult lives.

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Foreword

This book is an historical report from three years after freedom began in America; so it is a work of imagination - a series of best-guesses. Its premise is that on a certain date in the near future, called “E-Day”, all government in the USA will peacefully evaporate, leaving every member of a well-prepared population to own and operate his or her own life without interference. It attempts to describe how things work out in the first three years of the resulting free society.

“A Vision of Liberty” recognizes first and foremost that things are what they are – that “A is A” and therefore A is never non-A, or more pompously that the “law of identity” is inviolate. Government is usually mis-identified as a benevolent entity answerable to the people whom it serves; the reality is expressed on the back cover of this book: “governments have denied every person's basic right to own and operate his own life - resulting in distortion, mayhem, destruction, misery and death; in the 20th Century alone they murdered 262 million civilian people supposedly under their 'protection.’” A is A; *that's government.*

The most important of the book's assumptions is that everyone has learned the real nature of government and of individual freedom and responsibility, from such sources as my booklet “Freedom and How to Find It” and in more depth from the interactive course TOLFA, The On Line Freedom Academy at tolfa.us – to the degree of deciding never to work for government in any capacity, and so as to become prepared for its evaporation; and that part is real.

Very probably other freedom academies will appear, to provide the needed education in some more attractive or effective way, and if so that is all goodness – the sooner, the better. Governments are steering the world towards a nuclear war, or at least towards international hostility likely to cause the progress of civilization to stagnate, so there is no time to be lost.

Its description of the resulting free society does not include any account of war, or defense. The reason is simple: there is very little to report, for there is no war or likelihood of war. America has no government, and therefore poses no threat to any foreign country or faction. At the same time, no foreign aggressor perceives a cost-effective opportunity in America - for his invaders would face a quarter of a billion individuals with plenty of guns, who all know how to use them; his cost of controlling us would therefore be astronomical while his possible pickings would be very slim; having escaped slavery, this free people is not about to re-enter that state. Both the feasible sources of *motivation* for war are therefore missing, and the absence of a chapter about it is significant.

Three flaws were evident in the freedom movement of the early 2000s:

- doubting that a free market would ever be realized, it was introverted and discouraged
- virtually no attention was being paid to what it would be like in practice to live free, and
- no systematic, credible, proactive plan existed for making it happen.

The Academy responded to the third of those flaws, while this book offers a start for removal of the second. Those

two together will, it's hoped, suffice to remove the first. Provided Americans do as recommended and withdraw their labor from government, the arrival of the free society described here is *inevitable*; the understanding the Academy delivers is at least adequate, and the task of spreading it by that method is very simple. The book will certainly prove wrong in some details of what that free society looks like, but if the reader will overlook those defects he will gain a glimpse of what mankind has longed for during all our existence, and anticipate the most important event in human history.

Welcome, then, to this Vision of Liberty.

1. Liberation

"Liberty", or freedom, is about each person being in sole charge of his or her own life.

Every one of us has that *right*, but it's never been enjoyed in *practice* - or not since the first marauders over-ran some productive farming community about 10,000 years ago and enslaved its survivors so that the attackers could live off the fruits of their labor while claiming to "protect" them from other marauding gangs of thugs. That, according to Franz Oppenheimer in "The State", is the probable origin of governments. Governments *govern*; that is, they take away from each person under their control the right to be his or her own exclusive owner/operator - in practice. They are therefore all 100% irreconcilable with liberty.

This book is about the recovery of that freedom to govern oneself alone - about the practical restoration of that right.

Gradually and despite the heavy propaganda drilled into each succeeding generation that government is needed to "secure" the rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," a small but growing minority in America came to wonder how anybody's individual rights could ever possibly be "secured" by history's *primary violator* of individual rights; and to grasp that government is not only "evil" - as Thomas Paine realized - but also completely unnecessary, which he did not perceive. Its evil has multiplied as the bloody record of the 20th Century attests and that of the 21st continues to confirm; its alleged necessity becomes ever harder to perceive. There is not a single thing that government does, which a free market

could not do better, cheaper or both - nothing, that is, which a sane and peaceful person might voluntarily purchase. Gradually, it is being revealed as an absolute parasite - exactly like that first gang of marauders, the original "protection racketeers."

The intellectual case for doing without government has roots in the 1700s when the "enlightenment" thinkers first shook off the shackles of superstition and started to look at the world rationally. By the mid-1900s a brilliant array of writers and economists had arisen (von Mises, Orwell, Rand, Nock, Rothbard, Friedman (*père et fils*), Hazlett, Nozick, Alexander...) to show that government was a drag on human peace and prosperity and in 1971 in the USA there was even a political party founded to reduce or abolish it - though the entrenched power of the Democrats and Republicans combined to prevent those Libertarians gaining traction; except, that is, to spread further awareness of the question: "Government - who needs it?" This book owes almost everything to the insights of these towering pioneers of liberty.

Sometimes it's said, even by those who understand a little of the lethal, monstrous absurdity of governments, that society needs rules and would not survive without one if everyone were "doing his own thing" without restraint. This view completely misunderstands liberty. A society of free people would have plenty of rules - but none of them would be imposed from above; they would all be formed by *explicit, voluntary contracts* between the free individuals of which it's comprised. Hence, no obligation would exist except those each person had voluntarily undertaken - usually in exchange for some benefit. Thus for example a marriage contract would impose obligations on each party, but only those to which each had agreed and without any coercion applied by any third party; in

contrast, prior to E-Day governments impose rules on whom one may marry, how many one may marry, and even whether one may marry (as in the term "marriage license.") This is not to commend any marriage arrangement other than the very popular and time-tested one of one man and one woman - merely to say that if an alternative is preferred it's nobody's business whatever, except that of the contracting parties.

That is the background for what happened next, as the new Millennium began.

As everyone knows it began with a bang on September 11th, 2001 and a healthy sign was that even two decades later a large minority of Americans believed that the attack had in some way been contrived by their own government, so as to condition everyone to accept even more restrictions on freedom, notably on privacy. (It's not important whether that belief was accurate, just that it existed - that so many distrusted government so much. In fact it was almost certainly wrong, except in the important sense that six decades of pro-Israeli foreign policy had provoked the Muslim world to take some form of revenge; and possibly that the attack plans were discovered before it took place but allowed to proceed anyway, as in the "LIHOP theory.")

That was followed by the obscene and infamous "Patriot Act" that was put in to law before the lawmakers had bothered to read it, and by two more wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq. Soon afterwards a few of those who understood what all government is, took rational action to bring about its early demise and so created "The On Line Freedom Academy."

The aim of TOLFA is to provide a re-education to

every literate person in America, so as to bring to the whole population the key findings of the thinkers and writers mentioned above. We realized only one important fact that is perhaps original: that a free society cannot possibly survive (even if it begins) until and unless virtually every member of it *understands* it and, so, *desires* it. It's quite easy to see that if government were somehow abolished before those conditions were fulfilled, it would be back in business in a heartbeat, for nobody would know how to live without it. So the Academy went back to first principles.

Its **most important first principle** is that human beings are *rational self-owners*. That we are rational rather than instinctive is plain from a comparison of behavior with any other animal; we are not "hard wired" to react thus and so in given situations but we *figure out* what to do by the exercise of reason. We humans have far more brain mass than any species except dolphins, in relation to body mass, and have developed its use to the point that we can build machines to travel to the Moon and beyond, taking on board a camera to send back live pictures of the trip.

That we are self-owners rather than pack- or hive-members is evident from the impossibility of answering the question "if not your own, then whose?" That is, if you or I do not have the absolute right to own and operate our own lives, who does? No answer is possible, because if some other human being or group had the right to direct your life, one would have to know how that right was acquired - yet every member of it, being human, would not even own himself, let alone anyone else. Since, therefore, the self-ownership premise must be assumed implicitly by any who would try to rebut it explicitly, it has the status of an "axiom"; it is undeniably so.

This kind of rational, relentless reasoning is seldom undertaken by ordinary members of society, not least because twelve years of government schooling teach them *what* to think instead of *how* to think. That is why a program of re-education is indispensable. It's not at all hard to see, once the mind is applied to the matter - but it does need that initial impetus.

The **second most important principle** taught is that governments exist to *govern people*, as above. Again, perfectly obvious and undeniable when pointed out, but usually it is not pointed out. When this core nature of government is compared to the core nature of human beings, the incompatibility is obvious: government is an irrational concept, diametrically opposed to the nature and so to the wellbeing of self-owning human beings. That grotesque contradiction or mis-match is the "garbage-in" that results in the "garbage-out" of which you can read in today's newspaper. Perhaps we have been conditioned to embrace, depend on and even trust government, in a kind of gigantic "Stockholm Syndrome" - for we hardly know how to get along without it.

And so the needed re-education program was put in place; TOLFA was launched. It is invulnerable, being fully decentralized. No one person or group knows who is taking part, and because it is spreading by CD or other portable media it does not rely on any network that government can sabotage. Its success will be driven entirely by those discovering the rational nature of human freedom, not by any central leader or sponsor. It starts with those two vital principles and develops an understanding of their implications with regard to markets, ethics, justice, economics, family, religion, defense etc.

The way the Academy was designed to spread rapidly is

the same used for Freedom and How to Find It, the e-booklet I wrote in 2024: person-to-person. TOLFA takes at least a few weeks to study well, so that naturally takes longer than reading the booklet, which can be done in an hour; but in each case exponential math gets to work. If in some period each participant introduces two people to join the course, and they likewise, the number of alumni grows as the series 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64... all the way to 268 million, the adult US population.

And so, when our Vision begins, at negligible cash cost government will have been deprived of employees and its age-old deceptions will lie exposed to all.

That brings us to E-Day, and to our Reports from three years later, which make up this Vision of Liberty.

2. Ownership

Although I lack his inherited wealth and good looks and silver tongue and interest in political power, I do have this one thing in common with the late Bobby Kennedy (Sr): I don't "see things as they are and [just] say why. I dream things that never were and say why not." So let me take you to a Spring morning soon after E-Day, when I awoke to the singing of the birds. It's as if they were welcoming mankind to the state of freedom they have always enjoyed, after our long dark journey through the Age of Government; for that is now history. I lay awake for a while, savoring the moment. What did I treasure most?

Each to his own, of course, but I think my greatest or at least my first treasure was the realization that I'm an *owner*, at long last. The sheer pleasure of owning was something in which to luxuriate. I recall sipping a Sam Adams at a certain sidewalk restaurant with a distinguished fellow anarchist, and he was wearing a custom T-shirt that announced "I Love to Own". So do I. The shirt caused quite a few passers-by to double-take, one of whom had been programmed to suppose "ownership" had something to do with possessing *other people*! We tried to set her straight.

Owner of what? - first and foremost, I reflect that morning with enormous pleasure that at long last, I own *myself*. Self-ownership is the birthright of every human being and always has been, but as we know it is absolutely denied in practice by the very existence of government - even small ones. Either one *can* make all one's own decisions, or one *can not* make them all; it's binary. And now, as I lie awake and happy on this morning, I know I can make every

single one. Finally, my destiny is all mine to make; I'm wholly responsible for the outcome and wholly free to set the course of my life just as I wish. I'm a full human being! Can there be any greater delight?

I'm the owner, next, I reflect with pleasure, of the *home* in which I live. Now, there's nothing wrong with renting, on terms mutually agreed. It frees up capital for investing more profitably than in real estate, and now the Age of Government is over, the peculiar leverage that made real estate investing so profitable has vanished. Absent tax and its mortgage-interest deductions it is no more attractive than other ways to save, while absent zoning laws, its artificial price escalator has ended. However, I chose to own. I saw what was coming shortly, so I found the most expensive home I could afford and mortgaged it to the hilt - and at my age that wasn't easy, I can tell you. I let the payments slip a little - not so much as to alarm the bank, just a little - so that prior to E-Day, there was still a huge amount owing on the loan. But as I'd expected, the government finally realized it might be on an irreversible track to extinction because large numbers of vital employees were quitting and a much larger number of taxpayers were paying short or not at all, so tax revenues were falling off a cliff while nobody in his right mind would lend it money by buying its bonds. That forced it to resort in panic to its single remaining source of funds: to print the stuff. So in that year America experienced what Germany did over a century earlier: hyperinflation. What did I do? - I loaded the car trunk with \$1 Federal Reserve Notes, drove round to the bank, and paid off every last buck of the \$500K owing. When I'd taken out the loan, that was a heavy sum; but when I repaid it last year, it was just a heavy load on the car springs. The bank didn't like it, but since it had signed the mortgage and was a member of the conspiracy that got the words "legal tender" printed

on the face of all 500,000 of those bits of paper, it was an offer it couldn't refuse. So here I am, enjoying a fine house that I own, certified free and clear, largely paid for with almost-worthless paper.

When I shed this mortal coil my heirs will receive it, without deduction of any death tax of course, for there is no government to levy such a repulsive confiscation. Meantime, there's no government down the road either, to threaten seizure of the house if I should fail to pay their annual serf's tribute, aka prop-tax. Now, *that's* ownership, never before seen in history. What a joy!

I'll also take pleasure, as I lie enjoying the bird songs, in owning *money* - because money can buy almost everything else one might desire. As I'd expected, the market, newly-liberated, overwhelmingly chose gold as the medium, with a nice array of electronic as well as physical banking services available so that one can easily purchase items priced in milligrams. But when I recently bought my personal helicopter, I took 3 kg of actual gold bars. It's a doddle to fly that thing, there is so much electronic stuff aboard, collision-avoidance technology and so on, that even an old geezer like me is free to move about the country. There are such marvelous places to see, and of course great people to meet, who helped bring E-Day to pass, that it's one of life's greatest pleasures.

Another reason I like owning money is that it can buy help - the sort one hires, to keep the house and garden looking tidy. I mentioned it's a big house, so there's a lot to clean, and although there have been many labor-saving devices invented and marketed for just such a purpose, still my old bones creak a bit and it's nice to have real people do the job. Happily there's no shortage, because government still survives in Mexico and Canada - albeit probably not for

long - and so wages there are appalling and residents are only too happy to migrate in the meanwhile to the former US of A and sell their labor where it commands a better price. So you could say I'm waited on, hand and foot. It's a nice feeling, and very suitable for a nonagenarian.

I'm also the owner, lastly in this short account, of a *business* and take great pleasure in that. I owned another small business in and after 1984, and that was a lot of fun, though not always profitable, but during the last decade (sensing, again, what was about to go down) I founded a firm to take advantage of the expected changes - and was lucky enough to find some crackerjack people to do most of the work, for those creaky bones of mine are ill-suited to such activity. They were all folk who had graduated from the Academy and had quit their government jobs and adapted very well to the free market. The business area I chose was that of cleanup. See, I figured that after government imploded there would be an humongous mess to sort out, and of course I was right.

Not far away there was a government storage facility containing thousands of fragile canisters of poison gas, and folk living nearby were real nervous about that WMD. So I set out to buy the whole 100-acre site, promising to dispose safely of the government poison. I say "buy", but actually that's not too simple. How does one buy something from an entity that was always fictional and which has now altogether vanished? - and which never held true title to the property anyway? It's a tough one, and others have found different ways in different circumstances, but what I did was to advertise my intention heavily, asking that anyone wishing to oppose my claim to the site would come forward and say why. Nobody did, so I registered my property at the local title company, including the promise to clean it up within two

years. So the 100 acres cost me nothing.

I then recruited staff - mostly, people who had worked at the former storage site. They adapted to the new free market very well, and they knew the details of what was where. Bill, particularly, shouldered much of the work and I gave him a good share in my company. Our solution was first to take over an abandoned coal mine 20 miles away that I had heard about, one with unusually deep workings - and that purchase, too, didn't take much gold although it did cost a bit to check out and repair the hoist machinery.

You can guess the rest; we trucked the poison gas to the mine, encased each pallet load in cement and lowered it 4,000 feet in to the ground, then sealed the shaft with 100 feet of concrete; the job took 18 months. We then partnered with a home developer to build houses on the 100 acres, which we sold for a *very* handsome return on my gold, and even Al Gore's grandkids reckoned we'd done a decent job. Bill and I are now figuring out how to put the surface land at the old mine to profitable use. I feel a tourists' Museum to the Age of Government would fit well, but he says that that market is already getting saturated.

We'll find a way, even if we have to plow it under and grow pot.

3. Health

I was quite elderly when government finally collapsed, so if anyone had cause for concern about that decapitation of the health care system, I was the one. At this age, one's good health assumes an importance never considered in the carefree days of youth and prime. However, I need not have worried; as always, the market works.

Political management of medical services didn't happen overnight, of course - it grew, over a period of more than a century. First, awareness of a "need" was created in the late 1800s out of a few cases of quackery, then laws were written to prohibit the practice of medicine without obtaining an expensive education and a government-approved license. That very neatly excluded low-price competition and set up the profession for a prosperous century - given that demand (sickness) could be safely relied upon to recur. Then came the licensing of what medications could be prescribed, with the consequent escalation of their cost, so that pharmaceutical makers as well as physicians could make a heap of money at patient expense, provided only that they danced to the government's tune. Then the problem government had created (unaffordable health care) was "solved" by taxing everyone and using the loot to pay the bills. This started in the 1960s and went on increasing through the first quarter of this Century until we had a system from which nearly all financial incentive for excellence had been drained and which was in effect one more giant government bureaucracy, hard to distinguish from those in Canada or Europe. Truly, government was great at breaking your legs, then handing you a pair of crutches paid for by someone else. You'd think people would have figured out

from those and the old Soviet example that good health is inversely related to government involvement, but most people didn't do that on their own; only as the Academy was used in exponentially increasing numbers did such awareness spread wide.

And so it all fell apart, as E-Day loomed, and we held our breath: would the market keep us healthy?

Of course it did! I reckon it will improve in the future by leaps and bounds, but even now after only three years, the health care industry is in better shape than it's ever been. This relates a few of the details I've seen.

1. Supply increased - that of competent professionals, that is. This came about quickly in four main ways:

(a) Medical scientists locked up in fruitless government-funded "research" were suddenly released for productive work. The best known of these was the AIDS swindle; that disease never did exist (Google "Peter Duesberg" to see why not) yet several billion stolen dollars were being spent chasing a vaccine for it.. That buys a lot of medical researchers - who are all smart, and when they realized what was about to go down most of them had quit and now of course none are left; instead, they are all in the market having dusted off their bedside manners, selling their services to people who wish to buy.

(b) An horrendous proportion of every physician's time was wasted conforming to government rules and completing its paperwork, but after E-Day that waste was eliminated so each could spend much more of his time doing what he had been trained to do. This was estimated to be equivalent to bringing a 25% increase in the number of available physicians and had enormous consequences

even worldwide; for whereas in recent decades professionals have been "imported" from India and other lands where their skills were urgently needed but whose pay rates were not competitive, today American doctors can meet the domestic demand and so more foreign-born physicians stay home and treat their neighbors.

(c) Some physicians - hard to tell yet, how many - had left the health care industry and given up, in effect, because of the depressing effect of constant bureaucratic interference. I recall one who tried to keep more of what he earned, in a way of which the old IRS disapproved; that made him a felon, which meant loss of his license. When released, he figured it just wasn't worth the hassle of starting over, and pursued another profession. A perfectly good resource, lost to medicine. However, after E-Day some of those took a fresh look, and re-opened their practices.

Those without a medical degree but with good knowledge of the field - nurses, paramedics - sometimes hung up a shingle on their own account, advertising of course no more expertise than they actually had but aiming to serve the needs of patients with everyday maladies for low fees. This took demand pressure away from those with more advanced skills. Quacks, in the rare case that they show up, are quickly disgraced by the free, Net-based flow of knowledge so all customers know pretty well what quality of counsel they are buying.

2. Demand shrank at first as patients had to pay directly the whole cost of a doctor visit, instead of just a small percentage. Initially there was a lot of interest in insurance policies that would pay those bills, but it deflated fast when members of that industry announced the premiums they would require. Obvious when you think about it, but insurance is simply not a good idea for expenses that one

is almost certain to incur; it works well only when the event at risk is rare, unexpected, and more or less random. Otherwise, the premium is certain to be greater than the cost of paying directly, for the insurer too expects to eat.

So, sure enough, folk with minor ailments found ways to medicate themselves – and then, as the supply of paramedic services came on line for moderate fees, they found a less expensive way to get adequate advice if and when the abundance of free, interactive diagnostic programs on the Internet didn't suffice.

By now, the true economic demand (the wish, plus the money) has settled down and most people fix a health problem first by checking the Net to match symptoms, then buying any needed medication over the counter. In case of doubt, they spend a bit on advice, choosing the level of skill which seems to match the condition; if they start too “low” the nurse (for example) refers the patient to a (more expensive) specialist because her own reputation in the marketplace would suffer acutely if she offered advice she was unqualified to provide. So having shrunk initially, demand for physician assistance has now risen to over two thirds of where it was before E-Day.

3. Prices tumbled in response to (1) and (2) above, as they must always do in a free market when supply rises and demand falls. It's perfectly normal already to incur an office-visit bill for about one gold gram, or a third of what it was back in the Oughts; and I'll not be one bit surprised if they fall yet further as the more inventive members of the industry find ways to deliver more for less. Already, one can sometimes see shingles announcing such as “**New Patients Wanted – FREE First Visit!**” and offers like that have not been dreamed about in living memory.

Another useful service that's emerged is that often, physicians advertise such as “**Discount Medications**” - meaning that they keep in stock a few dozen pharmaceuticals they frequently prescribe, and share their profit margins on them with the patient while saving him a separate trip to the pharmacy. Pharmacists don't like that, but hey, the game isn't rigged any longer, it's a free market, so they are having to adjust their range of merchandise. (Some of them are selling liquor – a nice touch – and of course, Laudanum has reappeared on their shelves.)

This has meant that per patient, physicians receive less than before. However, because of the much smaller need for paperwork and backside-covering, each has much lower office expenses. So their overall earnings per year are not all that different – and of course, it all stays theirs. None of it is taxed away.

4. Extra Goodies. In the old days I would sometimes ask, when taking my leave of a doctor, prescription in hand, "Now, does this come with a money-back guarantee?" and the negative reply would come with a polite smile. Then the smile became less polite. Then there wasn't even a smile. Government workers, knowing the customer has no alternative supplier, tend to be a humorless lot.

In the discipline of the now-free market, however, it has become urgent to outbid the competitor down the street, and limited warranties have begun to appear, despite the inherent difficulty of predicting how any one human being will react to particular treatment. As experience is gained, I expect this practice to grow, and with it the quality of care in terms of results achieved.

5. Pills Got Cheaper. There is a considerable necessary

cost involved in developing new drugs, and that cost has to be recovered from sales. However in the last half-century of the Age of Government, they were greatly bloated by two major factors: (a) the pre-release testing was required by the FDA to be artificially extensive and expensive and (b) the developer was given only a fixed number of years to sell the product under his monopoly or patent so as to recover them all.

Both of these price boosters have disappeared, and with them retail prices have begun a steep decline. The developer still takes great care before announcing a new product, for he would be liable for any negligence - but he can sell directly to the patient without the cutout, so familiar in advertisements under the *ancien régime*: "ask your doctor about...." Cheaper, generic lookalikes appear sooner - but the original developer can still promote his version with such as "Buy Merck. Be Sure, Get the Real Thing."

I recall that back in Ought-7 when Barack Obama was campaigning, one of his most sinister promises was to use the law to stop drug companies "paying manufacturers of genetic products not to bring them to market." I've never been clear whether that was actually happening, but he said the law didn't forbid it, so he'd fix it just in case! Like all other pols, he couldn't understand; the free market has taken care of that potential problem very well. First, the price difference between original and copycat isn't all that huge. Second, there are a large number of generic drug makers and it just isn't possible for Big Pharma to buy them all off. And third, if they ever did, their reputation among customers would sink to that of charlatans like Obama.

Naturally, traditional remedies and pain-killers like

vitamins and marijuana are available without price-boosting prohibition or regulations, for those who prefer to keep their bodies as free as possible of powerful new drugs and let the immune system work its wonders. Self-care with such remedies is still about the cheapest kind of medication.

6. Responsibility has been re-introduced. It was really absurd that in the first decade of this Century huge numbers of Americans took so little health responsibility that obesity became commonplace even among children. Now that payment for cures is made directly and the "government will pay" fiction exposed and abolished, there has been a sharp change in the degree to which people care for themselves. Fast-food joints have reacted swiftly to the change in demand, and the commonplace valediction "Take care!" has acquired serious meaning; people do, now, take care of themselves much more.

7. Privacy has been restored. I was horrified, when back in the 1990s I first saw an abomination on paper called the "patients' bill of rights" - it was actually a bill of *lost rights*, a limit on our privacy laid down by the FedGov. Previously (and of course today) if a doctor handled private information improperly, the patient could complain, claim damages, and ultimately sue. That wicked intrusion gave bureaucrats an almost free hand to peek and poke into everyone's medical secrets. Not any more.

8. Charity helped those who, after E-Day, no longer had Medicare and could not afford even the reduced cost of physicians or low-priced pharmaceuticals. This is only a temporary problem, because all those now earning a living have ample to put by as savings for such eventual costs; but meanwhile it is non-trivial and as always when a real need arises, free Americans have been generous to help

with charity. In the last few years literally hundreds of them have arisen and a small example is a charity I started: the Society to Assist Victims Of Government, SAVOG. Until recently it had no funds so was no more than an idea - but more recently I've been able to finance it a bit, and have had the enormous pleasure of helping out.

Overall, therefore, I'm pleased to report that the important industry of health care is in very good shape following removal of Big Brother, with all participants - patients, assistants, providers and medication makers - doing from it very well, just as we expect from a free market which by definition (all transactions being voluntary) provides win-win-win solutions. Only the massive overload of bureaucratic parasites has had to find alternative and productive employment, and now that they have done so, I've not yet met any of them who regret the change, uncomfortable as it was for a period.

So the disappearance of government has provided much wider choice, lower costs and higher quality. The result long-term cannot be other than a significantly healthier and longer-lived population. The progress of the human race has resumed

4. Education

I've now reported for you on the state of Ownership (Chapter 2) and Health (Chapter 3) in the newly-free America, and next I thought you'd like to know how education has fared, in the three years since government imploded on E-Day. I'd say that this is the industry that has improved most radically of all!

For nearly two centuries before then, almost every child in America used to leave home every day for two thirds of the year and attend an institution called a "school" whose alleged purpose was to prepare him for adult life. Every day in living memory, big yellow buses did most of the hauling - over 400,000 of them according to Wikipedia, traveling four billion miles a year, consuming about 400 million gallons of diesel oil, to take the kiddies to be taught that there was a carbon-fuel shortage and pollution problem.

That was just the beginning of absurdity. As everyone now understands, true learning - the answering of questions in the student's mind - can take place in a classroom mainly by coincidence. It's about the least effective learning environment that could be devised - yet with some rare and expensive exceptions, that is what government mandated. The result was mind-crushing boredom, which sometimes exploded in the form of student violence - and frequently led to pervasive drug use as the only way mentally to escape. Such universal, institutionalized child abuse made absolutely no sense whatever until one realized that government schools were always *intended* to "dumb down" the bulk of the population (to use John Taylor Gatto's famous phrase) - ever since the King of

Prussia found in 1805 that he needed a more obedient army and then all other governments fell over each other to copy his system. Thus, its purpose was never to teach students *how* to learn or even *what* to learn; rather, just to *respect authority*.^[2]

Ever since the 1840s the very remarkable thing is that such a large minority of graduates was able to learn anything at all, or keep any independence of mind; we must thank the resilience of youth and the human thirst for knowledge.

Since E-Day, the change has been so dramatic that "improvement" is a poor word to describe it. Here is what I've seen.

1. Brighter Kids. This outcome is what education is supposed to produce, first and foremost; to take what intelligence and ability and (above all) innate curiosity the child brings to the teacher, and respond to all of them to the greatest possible effect so as to broaden, excite and deepen his understanding of the subject of interest. Anyone who doubts the presence of that thirst for knowledge hasn't had pre-school children around the house recently! And anyone who thinks traditional schools served it well hasn't had many *in-school* children around it for a while. Being a nonagenarian I've had the pleasure of the company in recent years of some young great-grandchildren, and my goodness, they learn fast with free-market education! Gatto wrote fifty years ago that in his opinion "properly approached, reading, writing and arithmetic take less than a hundred hours to [teach]" and I'd say he did not exaggerate.

Education bears its best fruits in the half-century following graduation, so naturally it will fall to the next

couple of generations to document the full benefits of the change - but I have no doubt at all that they will prove spectacular.

2. Home Learning. This is primarily how it's done, in the new education market. During the first five years of life every parent provides virtually *all* the tuition a child receives (though in the last half century of its life governments made some ominous inroads into even that period) and the free market merely enables that arrangement to continue by providing a turbocharger for the parent's knowledge base - almost always, via the Internet. The "lessons" are interactive and responsive, with ample outbound links for inquisitive minds to follow, and systematic checkpoints and tests to measure progress. And of course, in each subject area there are several competing products, with more emerging every year.

A prerequisite is that one parent stays home to help. This was perfectly normal until government loaded up the tax burden in and from the 1960s so that frequently, both had to work outside the home in order to keep up the standard of living to which the family aspired, while placing the children in care of institutions approved by government. With the evaporation of taxes along with the government that imposed them, that norm has been restored. The implications of that restoration of family life and control go *far* beyond better education; much of the breakdown of civil society was caused by the breakdown of the family and the reversal of that is one of the sources of the present return of civility.

The usual 12-year curriculum has been vastly improved and customized (by choice of both parent and student, helped by those interactive tutorials) so as to scrap the time formerly wasted on the latest social-study fads in

favor of some serious micro-economics and math, science, history, literature, language, music etc and is set to be covered in 6 years or less, meaning that as the child enters teenage years, college-level guidance is needed and even the most diligent parent can be hard put to keep up - so at this stage there is, indeed, some in-person supplementary tuition by experts offering it at affordable rates to small groups of students on a local basis - not often in the former school buildings, see below, but in collegiate settings such as sitting rooms unless laboratories are needed. The new industry is young and still finding its way, and much of what's said here is drawn from the experience of the home-schoolers who pioneered the way *before* E-Day in steadily increasing numbers, at great cost to themselves.

The net result is that 18-year-old graduates (with the equivalent of a bachelor's degree) are fully equipped to take their place in the labor market having gained a true *education*, as distinct from having endured an experience which did not even equip half of them functionally to read their "diplomas." The benefit this will bring to all of society in the coming decades is hardly possible to overstate.

3. Huge cost savings are being enjoyed as a result of the closure of government schools. Prior to E-Day those "youth indoctrination camps" - for that's what they really were, and always intended to be - were funded via taxation with over 200 grams of gold (in inconvertible government paper, of course) per pupil per year - a drain on the economy of some 3% of GDP, all of which was paid by real people under threat of force. That 3% was equivalent to the whole annual growth of the economy in a good year, meaning that growth might have doubled in its absence.

That's the gross saving, and from it must be deducted the cost of free-market education - which is very small, but not zero. Its elements consist of (a) one Internet PC per student, (b) working space (desk, shelving) for each, (c) subscriptions to the interactive tuition services on-line, (d) fees to the supplementary expert tutors mentioned above and (e) the lost opportunity for one parent to earn wages outside the home. The first four of these are quite trivial, often 30 grams/yr/child in total, while (e) is more significant. Here however one enters a subjective area; Mom, say, is losing the chance to earn a kilogram a year outside the home until her children graduate, but gaining the enormous pleasure of their company and of guiding their developing minds; what value can be placed on that? I don't know; she alone can judge. I can say this, however: that in this free market, those parents who do *not* wish to play such an incredibly important role in life are perfectly free to pay fees to a for-profit school (or even in-home tutor) to do the job for them according to their preferences, and some are taking that option.

4. Buildings for sale. School buildings were only one kind of real-estate asset supposedly "owned" by governments, and the disposal of all of them is at present a large and ongoing activity. Unfortunately, schools were purpose-designed around classrooms and so far, the market has not produced much of a demand for that kind of architectural layout. They are, accordingly, going begging - tens of thousands of them, scattered all over the country.

The layout often includes an auditorium and sports arena, and those have been purchased separately at a fair clip, by profit-seeking promoters respectively of local orchestras and theater groups, and of local sports teams. Another

venture that so far looks promising is that of adapting the school kitchens and lunch areas into desirable restaurants; the zero acquisition cost is attractive, though that of changing the premises into something *chic* is more formidable - and all new eateries remain high-risk investments. We shall see how that cookie crumbles.

5. Universities - independent at last. No account of education in the new free society would be complete without saying what's been happening to institutions of higher learning.

Most of them - State colleges, particularly - are going the same way as the former K-12 schools; there is simply no demand for that quality of "higher" education, for the curriculum has already been covered before the home student reaches 18 and is prepared to earn his living. The same has proven true of many private colleges, which in reality were funded by taxpayer money in the form of various grants (though one noble exception remains as Hillsdale in Michigan, which always declined such tainted money.) For exceptional students, however, there is no limit to what they wish to learn and the "Ivy League" class of institution is still in demand, often for just post-graduate work and research; and although the faculties are having to make some big adjustments to what material is offered (the old-style statists either reformed themselves or left) this is exactly in line with the 800-year-old tradition of the University in Western culture. Better yet, all of it is funded only by fees and endowments - there are no government grants, because there is no government - so the customer carries his proper clout. Today, therefore, these venerable seats of learning are doing what their founders always intended, but with a complete absence of the "strings" that always come with the "grants" and for some of them, that's the first time it has ever happened.

I see that, too, as a very positive development and have high hopes that Princeton, for example, will turn out a lot more like John Stossel and Anthony Alexander and a lot fewer like Donald Rumsfeld and Ralph Nader - and that it may yet again attract some like Albert Einstein. I also note that when someone like JFK says he is "blessed with a Harvard education and a degree from Yale" it already brings a whole lot more than a round of LOLs.

Overall, true education is off to a flying start in the new, free America and that bodes very well indeed for a well informed, cultured and prosperous society that for the first time in nearly two centuries is centered again on the family. When accepting the NY City Teacher of the Year Award in 1990, John Taylor Gatto said:

"No large-scale reform is ever going to work to repair our damaged children and our damaged society until we force open the idea of 'school' to include family as the main engine of education. If we use schooling to break children away from parents - and make no mistake, *that has been the central function of schools* since John Cotton announced it as the purpose of the Bay Colony schools in 1650 and Horace Mann announced it as the purpose of Massachusetts schools in 1850 - we're going to continue to have the horror show we have right now." [emphasis added.]

It's a tragedy that it took so long, but the "horror show" is now well and truly over and thanks are due to the many who, starting fifty years ago and more, went to great sacrifice to keep their own children out of that system's clutches and so pioneered the practice of home schooling - and to the millions more who joined them, after learning the truth about what it was doing, in the decade preceding E-Day. They are the ones who have made the transition so easy for everyone else.

5. *Work*

The great walk-out from government work, culminating on E-Day, was the reason it evaporated. Nobody had lifted a hand or a shotgun against it, nobody had voted it out, and few had even with-held tax payments until a year or two prior - it merely disappeared when nobody showed up to the office. This was a truly elegant implementation of de la Boëtie's five-century-old advice to "withdraw support" from the Colossus. It succeeded completely - at Federal, State and local levels - and will never be needed again, except in every *other* country in the world, whose populations are busy re-educating themselves now, in preparation for exactly similar revolutions there, and have their governments trembling in their jackboots. Canada, in my opinion, will be the first.

The walk-out began earlier, but in the nature of exponential growth there was little or no tangible, noticeable bite to the process until six years prior. After then it gathered pace fast and by by three years prior, panic began to set in among the ruling class. Hey, what good is it to write laws and issue orders when nobody is there to enforce and implement them? Then by E-Day, it was all over. Every member of the entire population had each taken back his own life and those employed by him had told the tyrant "Take this job, and shove it" - and in America, at least, the Age of Government was finally over.

The first thing everyone learned in TOLFA about work is that absent government force, one's services are worth what an employer agrees to pay for them; neither more nor less. So as E-Day approached, some were eager and ready to find new ways to present their skills to the

marketplace and earn more, while others knew that they were overpaid (because government force had excluded potential rivals) and so anticipated a reduction accompanied by those priceless assets, a clear conscience and high self-respect. All, of course, knew that what we earned, we would keep - for there is no longer any tax. Nor is there any work wasted trying to arrange one's affairs so as to minimize taxes, nor time lost in the creative preparation of tax returns. The value of that lost time amounted to over 3,000 tons of gold a year; now, that's all applied to the productive economy.

That much is well enough known, and well celebrated. I write today about what's been happening in the three years since, in the matter of work - of how people earn a living in the new, free society.

The first fact of life at work is that **unemployment is zero**. Nobody who wants a job has been unable to find one, after the usual period of search and negotiation; for as in every true, free market there is *always* a price at which goods and services clear. No minimum-wage law prevents an unskilled black teenager, for example, placing his foot on the first rung of the ladder of success, as they did during the previous sixty years; so there are no longer gangs of aimless, resentful youths roaming the streets looking for trouble. Crime - or, rather, *aggression*, since "crime" was just a government word meaning the breaking of a law, of which none any longer exist - has accordingly dropped like a rock. Further: in a very few more years there will no longer be any unskilled teenagers, of any race; for all of them will have been properly educated.

That doesn't say everyone at work is satisfied - but dissatisfaction with earnings provides the mainspring for self-improvement and skill-enhancement so that each can

climb that success ladder, offering his sharpened skills where they will exchange for higher prices. This motive power was of course what drove the uniquely successful American economy of the 1700s and 1800s, when government restrictions on enterprise were relatively few. Now that we have kicked back into high gear - indeed, overdrive - I'm anticipating a resumption in that explosion of wealth creation and it has already begun.

Racial harmony in the workplace (and everywhere else) is much stronger today in America than it's ever been. It's hard to believe that only two centuries ago government laws facilitated the “ownership” of blacks by whites, that one century ago they gave whites a higher status than blacks, and that a mere half century ago they reversed course and gave preference to blacks over whites, other factors being equal, in hiring for the workplace. All laws having been trashed on E-Day, none of that applies now.

Instead, two factors have virtually eradicated inter-racial distrust. One is the fact that for more than one generation past, the increasing proportion of trade done on the Internet has meant that race and gender are *not visible* to those doing business together – unless one searches the other's profile on purpose. The other is that in this free market, the actual cost of prejudice is clearly seen; it's perfectly possible for a white businessman to refuse to do business with a black one, but *he loses any price advantage* of doing so if he does! Throwing good business away makes no sense in a society where self-interest is paramount, as examined in Chapter 8, so while I cannot say that such irrational behavior has disappeared, it's vanishing fast.

The next characteristic of work in our free society is that there has been a very **high rate of change** of jobs. That

followed necessarily from the great walkout; millions of people were employed directly by government and many millions more, indirectly – close to half the population in total. More than three million left the military and schooling segments, for example; and it's been wonderful to see how the new labor market has swiftly absorbed them all, exactly as theory predicted.

Less job-changing has been needed for *indirect* government workers - those employed by contractors - because the owners of those firms almost always anticipated the coming changes and re-tooled to produce things that real people might wish to buy - a nice case of beating swords into plowshares, in the case of "defense" contractors. Accordingly many of those companies were able to re-hire those who had quit, or dissuade those about to quit. Nonetheless the overall change rate has been huge, and that has triggered the emergence of successful job brokers and the very healthy growth of existing ones like the venerable monster.com and naturally, most of the job-hunting and -finding was done prior to the actual walk-out.

There have been a few who refused to face the reality of human nature and the inevitability of government collapse, and so who never did quit. These were always people at the top of the heap, mostly politicians who wouldn't understand Adam Smith if they fell face-first into a large-type copy of the Wealth of Nations. Most of these neanderthals have gone to Mexico or Canada, though a few were smart enough to exchange their paper for gold before the former became totally worthless, and so are able to live here on what remains of their loot, and I did hear a rumor that the President had become a receptionist in the White House Museum - but it wasn't so. She fled the country and I don't know where she's hiding, nor care.

Work in the newly-free America can be grouped into four types or market segments:

- market-based activity that has been in place for a long time
- replacement of those government services that were actually useful
- repairing the vast amount of damage done by government, and
- exploiting altogether new areas of technical and market opportunity

Existing market work needs little comment, except to say that since all the stifling regulations have been removed this part of the market has been enjoying explosive growth and has been recruiting actively, so absorbing a large part of the initial surplus of labor. This segment is the powerhouse of the rapidly growing American economy.

One example I must mention is the low-price car business. As long ago as 2008, the Indian manufacturer Tata produced a very simple 4-seater for the equivalent of 73 gold grams,^[3] but Detroit lobbyists have fought ever since to prevent this rival being imported to the USA, on one pretext or another. That's all history now, and several comparable vehicles are being built and marketed in the new, free America with dramatic benefits for low-income families. At that price it's feasible to afford one car per person rather than one or two per family, so the market potential is huge and work is proceeding round the clock.

Replacement work has been very interesting to watch. There was a very large number of functions monopolized by government, but most didn't take a lot of resource; its

main money- and labor-using activity was the useless and destructive one of redistribution. Roads, however, need maintaining and building, trash needs handling, justice needs maintaining, air traffic needs guidance, fires need to be extinguished, the occasional individual aggressors need apprehending and of course children need educating; the market has taken over all those and many more with for-profit, competing firms vying for business and doing the jobs very well for a fraction of their former cost. That big increase in efficiency means they do it with far fewer people, so there's been a large loss of jobs in such areas.

It's been partly offset because the massive move to parental education (home schooling) has meant that millions of moms are no longer working outside the home and so many of *their* former jobs needed filling - in a wide variety of industries.

So far, there has been some demand for armed protection, and companies formed for the purpose (associated with insurance companies) have employed a few former members of the US military and local police forces. The demand is mainly found along the Southern border, where private property faces land presently controlled by the government of Mexico; there has been some concern that it might send an army to over-run such border properties, using focused force that individual defenders could not repel. Hence the use of insurance companies and flying squads of defenders ready to help under contract. It was a reasonable concern, but no such attacks have taken place (the Mexican government has its hands far too full, trying vainly to repress the re-education of Mexicans that seems poised to terminate its existence as in my first paragraph above) and so I anticipate this new industry will not prosper for long; though there will remain some demand for it, even in the heartland, for not everyone wants to

keep weapons for his own defense. Insurance fits that situation well, given that the risk of aggression is so small.

Repair work has been a very active market segment so far, and although it too will fade away I think it likely to continue for several years yet, for the mess government has left behind is enormous. I'm playing a part in it myself. This "scavenger" segment is new and has been a large-scale recruiter of labor - often of the very people who helped create the mess in the first place, since few are better qualified to mop it up. It's interesting to note where the money is coming from. If there were still any statist economists around (there aren't) they would have argued that activity like this is an example of the "free rider" problem that the market (they said) cannot solve.

It has proven not so, of course. When reporting on "Ownership" in Chapter 2, I mentioned one example (of a poison-gas storage facility) and that shows a pattern for most cases: a creative businessman acquires a government asset and finds a way to clean up whatever pollution it is causing while making good money from the operation. The reasons why such entrepreneurs can do it when government could not are (a) they are rationally motivated and skilled and (b) they can acquire the asset free (there is a zero demand for a poison-gas dump!) just by staking the first claim with the local Title company. (There was some talk of *selling* former government assets instead, but this method has proven faster, and in the unusual case that more than one party wants the property, nothing stops A from paying B to quit-claim.)

Hence, creative people get the job done and make fortunes (the biggest so far has been made by the founder of "Silk Purse Enterprises") while hiring others to do the work at good pay rates; and the community gains a clean-up. As

always in a free market, everybody wins.

New-market work - the fourth type, above - is the most exciting and bears most promise for the future. I anticipate a rapid and endless expansion to come. It is fairly bristling with opportunities for innovators and those whom they employ.

Hundreds of new segments have opened up, with opportunity for investors and employees alike, even in these first few years of the free society - and already *hundreds of thousands* of new enterprises are at work, often sole-owner ventures or family firms, for everybody's new-found freedom fits very well with founding and running one's own business. You'll not want a catalog, so I'll mention just three segments.

One that I love is the personal-flight industry. That idea is a whole century old, but implementation was not feasible while government regulated the skies and the market was limited anyway to those with strong flying skills. In recent years however entrepreneurs have developed both inexpensive helicopters and car/plane hybrids *and* collision-avoidance, navigational and automatic-piloting aids so that for little more than the cost of a nice Mercedes, personal aircraft can be flown safely from one's back yard to pretty well anywhere, with very little training almost as easily as using a point & shoot camera. This is a market with huge potential and all levels of skills are in demand, from aeronautical and software engineers to assembly workers.

Another is in the medical-research field. Biochem and gene-splicing are hardly new, but with government nannies no longer brooding over the science with superstitious, censorious eyes the promise of stem-cell

cures is now really paying off. Cancer is not quite history yet, but it will be within a decade. Amazing things are being done for burn and accident victims, to grow bone and tissue that was destroyed - and even for neurological diseases, hitherto incurable. Nanotechnology too is fast fulfilling its promise, with incredibly tiny computers circulating in the body to do the surgeon's bidding. All this work is naturally the province of the best-educated, but creative business people play a key part also, in bringing the techniques to the market so that all can reap rewards while providing all in need with the best and latest in treatment. This is what markets do best!

Space continues to beckon, and if Robert Heinlein and Arthur Clarke were still with us they'd be in hog-heaven. The pioneering work of the Spaceship Company in 2005 was repeatedly hobbled by the FedGov's NASA monopoly, but that's now history and they succeeded this very year in taking a party of paying passengers on a trip to the Moon - and back, the most important bit. Ticket prices will tumble as they did for air travel under Dickie Branson's grandfather, so in the next decade I look for many thousands of people to go on that awesome trip. Meanwhile employees and investors are delighted and plans are afoot for the first tour to Mars - and Donald Jr is buying immortality by donating 40 gold tons on condition that the first landing place be named "Trump Field."

Overall, workers in our free economy enjoy enormous variety and exciting challenge, and we perform always in the knowledge that we're in full charge of our own futures and that success depends entirely on ourselves. This contrasts sharply with the meaningless nature of dead-end jobs in the old world but is in perfect harmony with the true nature of self-owning men and women - and mankind can now achieve whatever he works for.

In his thought-provoking book "The Closing of the Western Mind" author Charles Freeman showed that the brilliant progress of the ancient Greek and Roman world in terms of math, science, engineering and culture was interrupted in the fourth century by the deadly alliance of church and (Roman) state. That postponed progress for a thousand years, until the Renaissance rediscovered some of the old rational thought patterns and the Age of Reason developed and exploited them as the influence of throne and altar, which Robert Ingersoll called "two vultures from the same egg", was further reduced. Now, following E-Day, I believe the human race is poised for an almost unimaginable leap forward, greater by far than either of those major milestones in Western history; for at long last, the mind of man has been liberated from both superstitions.

Now, there is nothing to stop him.

6. *Wealth*

As libertarian pioneer Don Ernsberger said in a memorable 1984 speech, liberty *works*, and liberty is *right*. That is, it is morally good that human beings should be able in practice to own and operate our own lives exclusively, and it is highly effective and productive when we do so. There is no inconsistency between the two; no wealth was lost when society became free, and the acquisition of riches has not required unethical conduct. The two fit together beautifully and we're now proving it.

The reason for this is not just a happy coincidence; it follows logically. The reason is that as free people we are living in a **market society** - and a market consists of voluntary exchanges only, and voluntary exchanges always involve an increase in wealth; the reason for *that* is that wealth, or value, is a subjective thing. Each person rates it a little differently.

Recently I bought a wrist watch, for 300 gold milligrams. It's a nice, gold-plated and diamond-studded Fngeen from China, with day and date displays as well as time (because at my age I often forget what day of the week it is) and I valued it more than the money I paid for it. The vendor, however, did not want the watch - he had several others - and he valued my gold more than the timepiece. That illustrates the magic of the market: both of us increased our wealth! There was no loser in the transaction. We both won, for value is subjective. It means something different to each person.

Now, that always applies when an exchange is made

voluntarily - but *only* when it is made voluntarily. If some third party had stepped in and required that the watch vendor could not charge more than 250 milligrams, I might have been happier but he would have been deprived, disappointed, resentful perhaps. Since he's a dealer, he might have suffered the loss of all his profit, and so starved - depriving others like me of similar opportunities in the future. That would have been a win-loss situation and that's the normal condition of a society that is regulated and taxed. Thus, a free society must *always* be wealthier than a governed one, other things being equal.

And so it has proven, in the newly-free America, already - right from day one, the day after E-Day. Everyone immediately became richer because every sale and purchase they made was free of compulsion; everyone was a winner.

That's not to say everyone immediately made more money, just that they immediately gained wealth, pleasure, satisfaction. Those subjective things are part of what wealth is; arguably wealth consists *only* of them! At the end of the day - or of life, which in my case can't be far off - we feel wealthy when we can look back with satisfaction, a sense of pleasure at the people we have known and loved, the things we have bought and enjoyed, the places we have been and sights at which we have marveled. Yes, I take pleasure too in the gold over there in the safe - some of which was used to buy most of those other pleasures - but metal coins in a metal box don't actually constitute wealth (though it sure seems like it when you have none.)

True though that is, the tangible forms of wealth are important and easier to measure, and those too are

increasing by leaps and bounds. Remember, we're only three years in to our new society and the demand for economic measurers isn't as great as it used to be (not that their measurements meant a whole lot anyway) so I can't be exact about how much richer we are now than we were before E-Day. I do know for certain that everyone *feels* a lot richer, and as above that is very close to the same thing. But the best data that I have says that on average, we're about 30% better off than we were three years ago, and if that's correct it's a very healthy growth rate indeed - almost 10% a year, compounded. Given the large amount of job-changing that was necessary when everyone quit working for government, and the huge amount of ruin we have to clean up after it imploded, I should say that augurs very well indeed for the future. My guess is that the 10% annual growth rate will not only continue but substantially increase, for the next decade and beyond - and *that* would be absolutely unprecedented.

One reason why things are going so well is to reflect that under government, society was wasting a large amount of the "work" it was doing. Government was operating more than half the economy, and as has been long realized, government performs a given task with roughly half the efficiency of a profit-seeking, competitive free-market business - so simple math tells us that a quarter of the entire economy was a dead loss - and that is now being fixed, very fast. That *alone* will lead to a $(4/3 \Rightarrow)$ 33% increase in wealth.

Not only that: of the thousands of things government used to do, there is today no demand at all for many, I'd say two thirds of them. By "demand" I mean, of course, the desire plus the money; in some abstract way voters might wish for a foreign dictator to be toppled but only if someone else's money was used, and life put at risk, to do the job.

Today such things don't get done, there being no true demand. If I'm right about the two thirds, that means that previously, not only was half the economy being run at 50% efficiency but that two thirds of it wasn't wanted at all! That leaves the other ("private sector") half, plus one-third of the parasite-sector half that now survives, for a total of two thirds of the economy. Only $2/3$ was useful, the other third was a waste, and that has now been eliminated - those engaged in it are switching to activities that *are* in demand.

If we turn that fraction upside down, we can see that the new, free economy will soon deliver ($3/2 = 1.5$) half as much more wealth again as before - a 50% increase! - and as above, I reckon we've already seen more than half of that already, after only three years. Then the really serious growth will begin, the clean-up being more nearly complete and all our ducks being in a row.

The tangible form of wealth increases in any society to the extent that some of it is *reinvested* in capital goods, or "plowed back." We can see this fundamental natural law of economics from the example of Jeb McIntosh. At age 19 he was caught by the narcs with a few grams of cocaine in his pocket and the government put him in the slammer for *fifteen years*. On release on E-Day he had few skills and no money, but two advantages: his aunt had sent him page after page, in prison, of the TOLFA course. It was far from being an ideal way to learn, for the Academy is designed to be interactive on-screen, but Jeb is pretty smart and he wasn't short of time, and he managed to graduate. His second advantage was that his uncle did have a little money, and set him up on release with a small farm and abandoned farmhouse, that needed a deal of fixing.

Jeb then gained a third advantage: he found, fell in love with and married Maria, and she moved in to the farmhouse and they set to work to make the smallholding pay.

They worked the fields and grew enough by hand, with primitive tools like an elderly tractor, to live on - with some over to sell to city folk. Of the sales proceeds, Jeb saved some and invested it in farm machinery which will last a relatively long time and so qualified as "capital goods" - notably, a better tractor. So next season the soil was prepared, seeds were sown and the harvest reaped faster and more easily, meaning that the labor saved was used for other tasks; some to improve the farmhouse (additional wealth) and some to buy an extra field (business growth.) The surplus was *again* plowed back, with a resulting wealth increase last year too. This is exactly how American settlers worked and built the richest nation on earth. That is what real "capitalism" is all about - the term has nothing at all to do with the old cozy co-operation between government and big, monopoly-seeking companies that very deceptively used the same word.

The many who work in our zero-government society so as to build family wealth have no hindrances, no money skimmed off the top as taxes, which might have been profitably plowed back; so, instead of being able to reinvest a small portion of what they earn and watch the rest being wasted purchasing votes for politicians, they can and do reinvest as much of it as they wish. That is why I am very sure that America will become almost unbelievably wealthy at an unprecedented rate, as time progresses. In retrospect, it's a marvel that so much was achieved in the Government Era, despite its impediments.

Is the new wealth spread "fairly" among all members of

our society? - most certainly it is. Here's how and why.

The word "fair" has been grossly mis-used, so we need to understand it. It means well-balanced, free of bias, with effect on two or more parties that is as equal as can be in practice. So if in a boxing match one contestant has his hand tied behind his back, we would agree that that is unfair. Similarly in a buy/sell transaction if one party is kept in ignorance of some important facts (such as, that the engine is about to seize up in the used car) we say that is unfair; the seller sold it on false pretenses. Again: if any agreement between two people is distorted by any third party, that is unfair. In fact, any agreement made under duress is unfair. A "fair" transaction is one which is wholly voluntary on the part of each, and in which there is no deception, no fraud. That alone is consistent with freedom.

In the old world, most agreements were made under duress, applied to one or both of the contracting parties. Seldom was a contract written which did not include a phrase such as "This contract shall be subject to the laws of [the State]" even though laws that might affect it in the future might not have been written at the time the contract was made and which, when written later, favored one of its parties (the one with most political clout) over the other. Seldom was a transaction concluded that did not apply a government tax or a regulation to one party or both; it used to be commonplace to see a price advertised, for example, in the form of "\$X plus tax." The vendor got the \$X; the buyer had to pay the \$X plus. In the case of jobs, a wage might be agreed as \$20 an hour, and that is what the employer would pay out - but the employee would only see \$20 *less* tax deducted, and neither party could do anything about it. No labor contract therefore fit the criterion "fair."

Today, *all* transactions are fair because none are subject to third-party interference - and if one party to a deal engages in deception, he is efficiently called to account for his action as will be described in Chapter 7. Consequently, everyone in our society earns in exchange for his labor exactly what he agrees to, neither more nor less; and when a sale occurs, the price is exactly equally acceptable to both vendor and buyer. Accordingly, every person is treated fairly; he receives what he was promised and delivers what he promised in exchange, and any anomaly or exception is subject to impartial rectification.

A last thought, for anyone with a lingering, Socialist sentiment out there: fairness does *not* mean equality of outcome, and never did. That's because we are simply not equal; not in our abilities, not in our ambitions, not in the results of our endeavors. Some are more skilled than others, some smarter. Some find wealth not in the things they can buy with gold they earn, but in the leisure that accompanies a simple life at subsistence levels. But this is certainly true: every single one of us obtains fairly and exactly what he works for up to the limits of his abilities, and saves or plows back as much as he wishes of what he earns.

No society can exist which is wealthier than that.

7. *Justice*

For the first time ever in recorded human history, a major society has begun righting wrongs and restoring damaged rights.

True, I'm being a little unfair to the quite enlightened traditions in Somalia, to settlers of mediæval Iceland, and to villagers throughout Europe in the same era - who resolved social outrages like theft, homicide and assault by arraigning the perp before a group of elders and (in Iceland at least) ordering the guilty to restitute his victims.

^[4] Those were however exceptions to the norm, and resulted from the admirable application of common sense, rather than from a systematic, logical analysis of the faults of that norm - which was for society to be governed by laws handed down by a ruler, who also operated what he called a "justice system" to *punish* breakers of his laws, with scant regard for the victims if any and with no patience for any kind of oversight. England's jury system that began in 1215 did bring some oversight, but rulers there and here have done their utmost ever since to gut it of any serious power.

Here in America, everyone learned during the years leading up to E-Day what true justice is all about, and so were ready, when employees of the government monopoly walked off the job, to build a free-market alternative; and in three short years since then the result has been astounding. Let me tell you about its main features.

Courts compete for business on the basis of efficiency and of excellence in judgments rendered. All disputes are of course between A and B, to resolve a complaint by one

about the conduct of the other; the fictions of the State, or the People, never appear in court because they never existed in reality and nobody any longer pretends they do.

So if the relationship between A and B is governed by a contract, that contract spells out the court company to be used in the event of a dispute. If it is not (for example if B, a stranger, allegedly aggresses against A) then A appeals to his chosen court which invites B to appear and defend himself; if he fails to show, B normally loses by default. The court orders the loser to compensate the winner, and both the order and its subsequent execution are in the public record - readily available on the Net to anyone interested to check the character of A or B. Thus, if B were found to be at fault yet failed to pay restitution, that fact would be known to all poised to do business with him (eg by offering him a job) - and it usually aborts the deal there and then. Knowledge that such a heavy loss of reputation could be ruinous is the powerful motivation for B to obey the order (and indeed not to aggress in the first place.)

Though paid in the first instance by the plaintiff (or his insurer, see below) the court's fees are then recovered from the loser, which gives him extra reason to settle out of court if he knows his case is weak.

Representatives can be hired to present a case well, but unless the court's terms of business specify it up front, there is no obligation to do so; *"pro se"* cases are normally welcomed. Knowing that, competition among attorneys is real, so their fees are far lower than they were during the era of the cartel; nor do they act as "officers of the court" - they represent only their clients as spokesmen or advocates, and although sometimes still known as "lawyers" they are not attorneys "at law" because there are no laws. Juries are available, though not under

compulsion, and jurors are paid realistic expenses which are met according to the contracts applying and that may mean the winner pays, for example if the loser stated up front that he did not desire a jury. Juries were sometimes a safeguard when government monopolized courts, but now they are less common because judges prosper only as they render fair verdicts, not as they do the government's bidding. I think that over time, their use will fade away.

2. Aggression is rare. "Crime" doesn't exist any more, for crime was the breaking of a government law and now there is neither government nor law; so if A damages B in some way we call that "aggression" for it violates the self-ownership principle which is the bedrock of this free society. It's rare, because the re-education that led to E-Day was absorbed by every member of society able to read and the exceptions were very few. When a person understands what freedom means, he wants it, and when he wanted it, he got it - just by withdrawing support from government, whereupon it totally collapsed, having no other resource. So this free society began with very close to 100% support; everyone set out, in his own interest, not to initiate force.

The main exception to that, since E-Day, has been the hard problem of released prisoners - and it's worth telling that sad tale, lest any suppose I'm painting too rosy a picture.

By the last year statistics were published there were four million Americans imprisoned by their governments, and none of them could access on-line the Academy or any other material that would re-educate him about liberty in a coherent way. Accordingly, these four million were *not* ready to roll on E-Day; they were the exceptions. When released by the guards' walk-out, they therefore had no idea how to behave and little idea of what was going on.

Three quarters of them had committed only victimless crimes, so when they returned to their families or friends they were plunged in to some intensive homework and were able to catch up; for them, the problem was solved within three months and in any case, there was never more than a small risk that they would harm anyone.

The other million were the problem, for they *had* actually hurt victims in the past, and they too had been prevented from learning the better way to live. Of those, about three quarters had families or friends to go to, and happily they too were able to get up to speed with some intensive homework within six months - though during that period some of them did cause mayhem.

The hard core of the problem was the remaining quarter million, for they knew no way of living except to steal, usually with violence well refined by the government's barbaric prison system, and had no understanding of the benefits of non-aggression nor anyone to guide them towards it. So they created a great deal of havoc; they were dispersed around the country, but one sociopath for every 1,400 residents is one too many for comfort.

What they understood least was that we free Americans have guns and know how to control them. So when they attempted violence, these aggressors were usually shot in self-defense. It's estimated that 20,000 of them died that way within a year of the prison gates being opened. That's sad, and even sadder is that in over 1,000 cases the defender didn't draw fast enough, so that number of murders of innocent people marred the history of our new society. I wish it weren't so, but it's what happened; all the blame rests upon the government that (first) incarcerated these people like caged animals instead of letting the

market administer true justice and (secondly) prevented them gaining access to the Academy so as to be rehabilitated.

The violence reduced sharply after about a year. The surviving 230,000 ex-cons got the message - that aggression was far more dangerous than when their victims had been disarmed by law, and learned fast (with help from mentors they were able to locate) that there was now a safe and profitable way to earn a living which made it obsolete anyway. At the time of writing, I think this very nasty problem is now over.

3. Apprehension is efficient. That large but one-time problem having been solved, aggression is an uncommon event and when it does take place, if the aggressor is at first unknown any of several competing detective companies can be engaged to locate him or her. Since they get paid by results, they work with an efficiency that no government P.D. would have recognized - and they almost all belong to a trade association, which maintains a common database to help the work.

So whereas in the Government Era it was commonplace to find a large minority *even of murders* that were never solved, today already the apprehension rate is well over 95%. Once identified, the accused are brought to court as in (1) above.

4. "Victimless crime" is no more - for two good reasons: (a) there aren't any crimes at all, as above, and (b) when the only victim is oneself (eg someone over-uses drugs) there's nobody to file suit, and so far nobody has been so foolish as to sue himself. America's long, disastrous drug war has therefore ended, the price of mood-enhancers has dropped to that of aspirin, and the entire, violence-ridden

superstructure of drug trafficking has vanished. Some people do unfortunately still harm themselves, but there is no pretense that anyone else is responsible.

5. Insurance helps. The expenses of bringing a case against an aggressor are not trivial - especially if he needs first to be identified and located - so the old problem of making justice available to the poor as well as the rich has not gone away. It has, however, been elegantly solved - by insurance companies, and even by opportunists.

Insurers offer a range of protection policies, for premiums that started rather high have in recent months come down steeply as the new justice industry began to mature. The principle is simple: pay a modest annual fee, and if the need arises for you to sue someone, the insurer will assess the case, make immediate payment to you if he thinks it sound, and then take over the case by paying apprehension and court expenses and recovering and keeping all the adjudged restitution from the perp over time. Obviously the premiums are set to yield a good profit, and the anticipated revenue stream is discounted to net present value, so the lump sum paid to the victim is less than the perp eventually pays the insurer - but it relieves the victim from any up-front expenses. It's a popular option.

Opportunists also serve a valuable function, in the case that a victim cannot afford those up-front expenses and so does not have such insurance. They do the same job as the insurer, but instead of collecting premiums they contract with the client to keep a portion of damages recovered. Thus, every member of our free society, rich or poor, has access to a justice system that compensates him in the rare case of suffering aggression. This is the first time that has *ever* happened, anywhere!

Overall, it's hard to overstate the immense contrast between our market-based justice system and what pretended to be a justice system as little as three years ago. Then, most of the guilty suffered no consequence, some innocents were wrongly convicted, many who had harmed nobody were punished anyway, and none of the victims were compensated - except by the kind of savage satisfaction that comes from vengeance. Now, there is much less aggression in the first place and when it does occur almost all of it is brought to adjudication - by judges whose future careers depend on their reputation for fairness instead of their loyalty to government - and whose outcome is one of restitution, never of retribution.

Previously there was a total disconnect between the original act of aggression and its resolution by a government system based on law and punishment. The victim walked away with a thank-you at best, the perp was left to rot in jail, the taxpayers were forced to feed him, the government people got a good feeling and all the lawyers, a good living. Not for nothing was all that sometimes called "Just-Us"; but now, it is all in the past. There was no peace when there was no justice, but today for the first time ever, there *is* justice; and so, there is peace.

8. *Morals*

In the old world, there was a clear difference between justice and morality. Today, there is much less.

Previously, what passed for "justice" had to do with administering "laws", a few of which (like those forbidding theft and murder) were related to morality but most of which were not. There was nothing moral about having to register, for example, for "selective service" - except that to *refuse* to so make oneself available to kill the government's enemies could reasonably be seen as a brave and morally good thing to do. That was quite often so - it was ethical to *disobey* rather than to obey government laws, and so justice and morality often came into outright conflict. There was nothing immoral in driving at 70 mph on a deserted downtown street, but there was a good deal illegal about it; to do so when the street was crowded might have endangered many, yet the very same, arbitrary law applied. It was illegal (and very dangerous) to refuse to pay taxes, but some of the most morally upstanding in society did resist that form of theft.

The Romans saw the difference: "*malum in se*" was a bad act in and of itself, while "*malum prohibitum*" was a prohibited act, and was "bad" only because prohibited. Another example is that of assisted suicide; a terminally ill patient decides he has had enough pain and wants just to die, but needs help. Given only that his wish is clearly and unambiguously expressed, today we recognize that there is nothing immoral at all in providing such help - quite the contrary. Under the old law-ridden régime, that was a crime and Dr Kevorkian, for instance, suffered seven

years of imprisonment for his kindly work. It was "bad" only because it was forbidden.

All such nonsense has disappeared, and today suicide assisters advertise openly, and provide a valuable service to those in the unhappy position of needing it. First, of course, there aren't any laws at all; no obligations exist except those undertaken voluntarily. But second, no judicial action succeeds unless it is closely tied to an ethical argument; like "John contracted to deliver a cord of wood I paid him for, but he never did." If the facts support the claim, the justice system compels John to keep his promise or return the money - with interest and payment for the trouble and expense of filing suit. Ethics in our free society have to do with honoring contracts, and with doing nothing to any non-aggressor unless a voluntary agreement exists to permit it. That alone is consistent with our fundamental premise - that every person is his or her own, exclusive self-owner.

Our ethics go beyond that, though. In preparation for E-Day, all members of our society learned about a *rational* basis for doing good, which did not depend either on laws or on religious revelations; and it is, quite simply, self-interest. We do things to each other that are morally good (or at least which avoid being morally bad) because we each treasure a reputation for being a person who can be trusted, and because we wish to think highly of ourselves. Such a reputation is everyone's primary asset; without it, normal life is difficult indeed, because ours is a rather open society with few secrets, and once a good reputation is lost it's extremely hard to recover. A reputation for lying makes it really hard to get a job or make a sale; morality is therefore closely linked to success.

What, then, is our ethical standard; how do we define and

recognize "good" and "bad" behavior? Quite differently from how it was done in the old world. There, "goodness" had to do with self-sacrifice; today goodness is about self-enhancement. The self is all that everyone has, so any action that protects or enhances it is good, anything that damages it is bad. Enhancement of its reputation is good, whether that means fulfilling a contractual obligation, or helping someone in need without thought of return just so as to enhance one's self-esteem. Damage to the self is ethically bad, whether that means breaking one's word or defrauding someone and so becoming known as untrustworthy, or even just damaging one's own mind and body by getting stoned every night.

This is rational! - it made no sense at all to sacrifice oneself for others, because when taken logically to its limit that would leave the world with nobody except those unable to care for themselves, and so to the extinction of the human race. It also gravely demeaned those unfortunates, by branding them as morally "bad", whom the "good" were obliged to help. The old world had it pretty well exactly upside down. We have turned morality the right way up.

The moral principle of looking after one's self first was tested last month beside a river near my home. A young boy fell in, and was swept away by the current, obviously in danger of drowning. One Sam Nelson was nearby, and though he didn't know the boy, he was a swimmer, so he had an instant decision to make. Should he attempt a rescue, placing his own life at risk? - or should he let the boy drown, so as to be certain he himself would survive? As he told reporters afterwards, his mind worked very fast, to assess the relative risks and advantages. Sam first asked himself what value the boy's life held, to him; and since he didn't know the lad, that wasn't much. Everyone

is saddened by the news of a child's death, but Sam could anticipate no special or particular loss. But then, Sam considered how his self-esteem would suffer if he stood by and let the boy drown, and how it would be enhanced if he took what he judged to be a modest risk and prevented that tragedy. He next considered how his reputation and standing in public opinion would change in the two cases, and of course one's reputation is the biggest asset anyone has. After quickly balancing all those factors, there was no hesitation; he discarded his jacket and shoes and dove in. It was close, because the boy had started to take on water before Sam reached him, but the rescue succeeded. Both were pretty well exhausted before Sam pulled him back to the river bank, but neither suffered anything a hot bath and good meal could not put right. The boy and his parents were profoundly grateful, and the TV reports made Sam out a hero which added to his reputation, and aside from all that he felt very well about himself. He gained, therefore, much more than he risked - and that's the essence of rational morality, for had Sam rushed to attempt a rescue without thought for himself and had failed, two lives would have been wasted and two families would have grieved; ridiculous on its face.

Our free market works because in any exchange, *both win*. That's because value is subjective; when I buy some food I value the steak more than the money, while the butcher values the money more than the steak. Therefore, trading - honestly, of course - is the primary way in which we bring each other gain; so trading is *itself* a positively moral thing to do. Again, this is the exact opposite of old-world ideas of "morality" in which teachers taught of "robber barons" and "greedy capitalists" who frequently "exploited the people." Yes, it's true they sometimes did - whenever they got their friends in government to exclude their low-price competitors, for example - but not as a

rule; the action of offering a service for a price is at worst morally neutral, and when accepted voluntarily is morally positive for the reason just given. Those teachers had it upside down, despite the fact that Adam Smith perceived by 1776, the very year that America began, that greed is good: that the selfish pursuit of profits actually brings everyone benefit, because in a free market profits are earned *only when someone wishes to buy*, having judged he'll be better off.

"Exploitation" is certainly immoral, but is only possible when one party is able to exert force on the other; trade unions used to do that routinely, when they had laws passed that forbade paying or accepting wages under a certain minimum, for example. That exploited the employer, who naturally had to raise his prices to compensate, and so through him it exploited us his customers - and hurt those willing to work for a lower wage by forcing them to stay unemployed. Again, today that cannot happen so for that reason alone ours is a far more moral society.

In the old world, "immorality" was often associated with the breaking of sexual taboos, and that too was absurd. Two (or more) people give each other pleasure, and that's supposed to be immoral? In reality the exact opposite is the case, and the old '60s exhortation to "make love, not war" was exactly on-target. Too bad it was extinguished for half a century. Now, I don't say that today, clothes and other forms of modesty have commonly been abandoned (even on hot summer days) nor that the line between consensual sex and rape has been blurred; quite the contrary, for consent is fundamental, as above, to our rational ethics. But the whole subject of relations between the sexes is far healthier than it ever used to be.

I've mentioned self-esteem, and that's the prime mover behind the surge we have seen since E-Day in *charitable giving*. I think that welcome though this is, it's only just begun. It's long been recognized that as someone becomes rich, he also becomes generous. That doesn't always hold, but it very often does; and in our free society there is a huge increase in the number of people becoming rich and their generosity is evident everywhere - not least because taxes vanished after E-Day so there is more available to be donated. Previous to then, the natural inclination to help the needy was ravaged by the fiction that voluntary help can be replaced by compulsory help, ie an act of theft at gunpoint followed by acts of distribution by bureaucrats under the pretense of "entitlements." Forced redistribution is not the same as loving care, any more than rape is the same as loving sex; but today, the faucet of human generosity has been opened. Indeed, I foresee a shortage of deserving recipients! - that shortage is not evident yet, for there is still a huge number of victims of government throughout society, but as time passes their needs will be well met and there won't be any new ones. I expect that when objects of charity are too few here in America, the generous will find outlets for their benevolence overseas. This can hardly fail to help promote peace and freedom worldwide into the distant future.

9. Money

Although many years have passed since he wrote it in 1963, Murray Rothbard's classic "What Has Government Done to Our Money?" still has no equal as an explanation of what money is and how government distorted it. Rothbard called for free-market gold, which was of course impossible while government remained in control - but when it evaporated, three years ago, the market almost uniformly chose gold as its primary medium of exchange so he has been handsomely vindicated.

The change was not instant. There had been a great deal of preparation - of quiet though illegal trading with gold - for several years, in what government called the "black market." As soon as people graduated from the Academy they knew that government paper was as doomed as it was completely fraudulent, so when they had enough over to save, they bought gold coin and bullion and squirreled it away somewhere known only to themselves and their heirs, or used it for trade with those they knew and trusted. What a wise move! During the last few years that government existed, its currency went South in a massive way, making the heavy inflation of 1979 seem trivial. In the last few weeks of its miserable life the paper dollar became as worthless as the 1923 German Mark, and dollar millionaires were two a penny. "Money" had to be spent the very hour it was earned, while it would still buy something. So those with a little gold in storage were much better placed, and they were the ones who had graduated earlier than in that final year.

Following E-Day gold immediately served its proper purpose, and those without any quickly earned some by

exchange of goods and services - and inflation stopped cold because the supply of gold is more or less fixed. True, for a few months there was a brisk trade in minting; that is, people scoured their attics for unwanted jewelry and had it melted down and pressed into coins. That did increase the amount in circulation and so there was some mild inflation for that period. Mining of gold continued worldwide, and by that means too the supply has increased by 1% or 2% a year - but productivity meanwhile has risen so very much more sharply than that, that prices have generally fallen - that is, there has been a net deflation of several percentage points a year. It makes a pleasant change! - and raises savings and investments, for we know money will be worth more tomorrow than today.

The exchange rate with the old US Dollar became infinite - there were no buyers of paper - so I can describe its value only in relation to goods and services. We've found that the metric system is far easier to use than the old one with 16 ounces to the pound, 112 pounds to the hundredweight (so why "hundred"?), 20 hundredweight to the ton, etc, so the coins are stamped with weights like "100 grams" and "25 grams" (respectively equal to 3.512 and 0.878 ounces.) A good wage rate for skilled work is about half a gram per hour, or 20 grams for a typical work week or a kilogram per year.

At once, you can see a problem: the smallest gold coin (10 grams) is too valuable for the purchase of small items like bread, beer and pizza - for it represents the value of nearly 2½ days' wages.

Since ours is a free society, nobody dictates what can and can't be used as money, so one solution to that has been the use of silver coins, at whatever exchange rate the market thinks good, and of credit notes issued by

companies of high repute, like nationwide retailers. Wal-Mart, for example, issue short-term notes denominated in several multiples of 10 milligrams, good for the purchase of goods from their stores to the face value shown; they have a built-in metal strip and the designs are changed often, so as to limit forgery. They can be traded anywhere for gold or other forms of money, at a discount or not, according to whatever agreement is made.

To my mind though, the neatest way low-price transactions have been made easy is by the use of electronic gold, which was first seen in 1996 but which was savagely suppressed by government after a decade and a half. With an account at any of the competing on-line gold banks (actually *all* banks are gold banks, so that's redundant) the customer carries a debit card with which to purchase anything priced as finely as to hundredths of a milligram. Variants on the idea have the balance carried electronically *within* the card - one can have it "recharged" by handing over a 100-gram coin to an exchanger, for example, and then spend the 100 grams in small amounts over time. Walmart, again, was using a similar idea in the 2020s with "money cards" – but with fiat dollars.

Banks and other exchangers charge fees for their services, since they like to eat, but competition keeps fees affordable and *reputation* keeps them honest. A "good name" in business is everyone's primary asset, for in this on-line era it's perfectly simple to check what A has said about B, rather in the way that eBay pioneered in the early years of the Century except that the writer of an adverse report had better be ready to justify his words if its target reacts with a denial. Everyone is "armed" in this way - his keyboard is a powerful weapon - and as was often truly said about guns, an armed society is a polite one. So it has proven. Reports made to the public database are worded

with care, and disputes (and their outcomes) that can't be resolved by negotiation are settled in court.

Banks are primarily warehouses, which store gold for customers and normally charge a small fee and issue warehouse receipts in the form of certificates (one genuine form of paper money now in circulation) and provide plastic cards as above. Some lend out or invest gold entrusted to them, but if so, it's made clear in the deposit contract and such banks (rather like the old Savings & Loan banks) pay interest to depositors rather than charging fees. That interest rewards the depositor for the risk he is taking, and he closely oversees the bank's investments to ensure he's happy with its policy. Hence, banks have evolved into two main types already: those that do and those that do not lend out depositor property. I notice that the former type is having a hard time at present; it seems depositors are much more interested in the safe keeping of their gold than in making upon it a modest return. That's understandable, for there are so many other, more lucrative investment opportunities available in the market.

The old practice of lending out *more* money than was on deposit (*nine times more*, in a typical case in the old world!) was made possible only by the Fed's fractional-reserve rules, which were endorsed by government and made the whole banking system inherently unstable while helping cause sustained inflation. That now never happens. Reason: banks can attract depositors only by demonstrating honesty. No sane person would lend a gold kilogram to someone who then printed up a "certificate" for nine kilograms and loaned it out at risk for interest! Such a scheme was absolutely mad - and is now universally understood to be mad.

The biggest single expense for most people remains our

homes, but their prices have begun to fall because in the old world they were artificially boosted by several factors triggered by government. Here's how I've seen this rather complex change.

First, the basic cost of a regular house was for a long time about 2½ gold grams per square foot of living space, and in a free market over time, fluctuations in demand (eg from a rising population) would stimulate responses in supply, leaving prices unchanged. However, over time several other factors "ought" to have brought that natural price of 2½ grams down some - so the government-caused inflation has been greater than it seems, and now that its cause has gone away I think we shall see in the next few years a fall that continues down to around 2 grams/sq ft. Those other factors are:

- Building techniques, productivity and construction materials have improved steadily over a couple of hundred years
- Construction "codes" that made building artificially expensive have been shredded; buyers now get only what they want
- Land is abundant (America has a population density eleven times lower than Japan for example) and there are no longer zoning laws to prohibit its use
- Telecommuting steadily reduced the need to live close to cities, and the booming personal-aircraft industry now promises to reduce it much further yet, so the city land-price premium will apply less
- The tax content buried in both labor and material prices has vanished
- Mortgages are not as easy to get, as below

Homes can be mortgaged as before - though that

expectation of falling prices means the days of 90% loans are long gone - and only when lenders place their own (or their shareholders') money at risk. The folly of lending large sums to borrowers with a poor credit record on the security of an ill-kept, grossly overpriced building therefore does not happen; the '08 recession took place because instead of allowing such lender irresponsibility to be resolved by the market (their collapse, and the transfer of any residual assets to buyers with greater responsibility) government immediately rushed to the "rescue" by having its quasi-central bank slash interest rates so that even more "money" could prolong the existence of those who had caused the problem – so turbocharging the mess at everyone else's expense, via inflation and the distortion to trade caused by the resulting depreciation of the government's currency. Had the economy been free then as now, there would have been a small setback and a quick recovery – as it was, there was a crisis and a recession.

So, housing remains a big expense but it's already falling and has further yet to fall. That will mean more money is available to each family for other spending and investing, which signals a healthy economy for many years to come. This makes a welcome contrast to the above "housing crisis" in which falling house prices did the opposite, by helping trigger a recession! With its "home equity loans" paid in paper money secured by phantom equity the old world was, once again, upside down.

A further, one-time boost to the economy has come from the widespread practice I mentioned in my report on Ownership in Chapter 2; during the months preceding E-Day many of us took the government's hyperinflated "money" and paid off our mortgages. Lenders got all they were entitled to - dumpsters full of paper - while we were left with nice houses, free and clear, each initially worth

perhaps five kilograms - *and* any cars, boats and other boys' and girls' toys which had been bought with those home equity loans the banks had touted for so long. Good deal! That meant we have needed to spend nothing on housing, so we've had much more available to spend on other things, or to save (which means to invest, so stimulating another round of economic growth.) Only the bankers were losers and since they had always been in bed with government that licensed the paper and forced creditors to accept it, the justice of that never struck me as anything but poetic.

The rate of investing, or saving, was for many decades very low in America because so much was siphoned off to the banks by those large mortgages and to the government by high taxes - which used the money to prop up failing industries so as to maintain voters' jobs, rather than in stimulating innovation - so the growth that only free capitalism can deliver was hindered. That brake has now been released. The extra money everyone has is invested in just such a way, and although three years is too short a time in which to see the fruits of that investment I've no doubt that it will bear a rich harvest in coming decades.

People invest *without Nanny's supervision!* There is no longer a brokerage cartel governed by stifling regulations; if John Sovereign wants to buy a share in the ABC Company he goes ahead and does it on-line, using whatever eBay-like service brings him the best price. He is, of course, exercising responsibility as well as his freedom - the two go together, as always. There are still a few charlatans on the Net as well as honest dealers, and the old principle of *caveat emptor* continues to apply. However thanks to the transparency of information there, no such charlatan survives long; even the novice investor knows to check out the facts before parting with money. In

my view that transparency will virtually eliminate misrepresentation a very few years hence - with infinitely greater efficiency than the old system of regulation. Bottom line: a lot more money is placed in ventures which, in the opinion of the individual taking the risk (than which there is none better) will yield the most benefit. This is capitalism at its best!

There are about 140,000 tons of gold in the world, including that used in jewelry, and proven reserves amount to a further 50,000 tons - which may take a century or two to extract. About 10% of it is in America, so it's sometimes asked, how can a mere 14,000 tons (14 million kg) suffice to circulate in an economy this vibrant - whose annual product, at last count at then-current gold exchange rates, was around 300 million kg, or over 20 times greater? The answer is shown in Rothbard's book, above; it *doesn't matter* what the money supply is, so long as it is stable. If it were ten times less than it is, prices - and earnings - would just appear as ten times smaller. It also doesn't matter because, as above, this free market can use for money whatever other forms it pleases.^[5]

Therefore it didn't much matter what happened to the 4,000 tons of gold stored at Fort Knox. It might have been nuked, as it nearly was in the James Bond fantasy "Goldfinger", or a claim might have been staked by some Kentuckian hillbilly who ever after would live in opulence, necessarily letting his fortune trickle down into circulation; but in fact a remarkably benevolent and intelligent soldier, Colonel Henry Lysander, provided a much better solution. He graduated from the Freedom Academy in 2024 and soon saw the unique opportunity chance had given him to benefit the coming new society while securing for himself and his men both wealth and honor - for he was the commander of the Fort Knox

Battalion, US Army. He figured out that the gold should (after E-Day) be placed in charge of a company operating an e-gold bank, for distribution among as many residents on that day as claimed one equal share; so he called his men together (those who had not already walked out) to explain his plan. They agreed to defend the facility against all attacks, and *not* to walk away, in the usual manner, from what was then still nominally a government job. He said that if they wished, after government vanished they could stay and form and operate the new banking company. Meanwhile, their wages would be paid in gold - regulations notwithstanding.

So it was; the new company staked claim to the gold and its enormous vault, and title was recorded in the usual way, the contract specifying that all 350 million in the new society would be allocated one equal share of 11.4 grams, minus a 0.1% administration fee to the company. Word of the plan had reached the Pentagon shortly before E-Day, and there might have been a nasty fight over it, but by then the Army was very short staffed and the fulminations of the top brass never came to much. By today, 300 million of the expected 350 million shares have been distributed, and as the contract provides, any surplus remaining five years hence will be divided among those who by that year *have* staked their claim. Most account holders are content to keep their asset in electronic form backed by gold in the vault, but the Fort Knox smelter has been fired up to produce 11-gram coins for those requesting metal, with insured overnight delivery. Former Colonel Lysander is one of the heroes of the new America.

Thus, our economy grows at a healthy rate (more goods and services are produced) and because the supply of money is stabilized by the market itself, prices are gradually falling. In this free society members all know

better than to accept in payment anything other than genuine money, no legal-tender laws force us to do otherwise, and for the first time in over a century we all enjoy knowing that the money in our pocket has true, intrinsic worth with which no government can meddle. For the first time ever, a large society has a rational way to store and exchange value.

10. Travel

We move around, in this newly-free America, for the usual reasons: to visit family, to find business or employment, and for the delight of seeing all the amazing, spectacular beauties this great land has to show. The big difference is that since E-Day, there's been nobody to stop or hinder us.

In 1987 there was a TV miniseries produced called "Amerika", with a K. Its premise was that there had been a nuclear exchange between the governments of the US and USSR, and that the former had capitulated rather than see more millions of Americans vaporized; so Soviet governors were sent here to rule. The movie well portrayed the profound poverty and misery that resulted, and I recall that one feature of their rule was that internal passports were needed to cross the borders of the several administrative regions they established.

Communists in the trade union operating in ABC-TV prevented the film from ever being broadcast again, but little did anyone guess that soon afterwards, our own government would do to them that very thing, with no assistance from outside. So we had become quite used to carrying papers everywhere for identification, with fingerprints and other biometrics, and to hearing government agents bark (albeit in English) "*Thre Papieren, bitte!*" What an irony, that in the 1940s some 400,000 American lives had been sacrificed, allegedly to erase such arrogance. What a relief now, to be rid of all that nonsense.

Government surveillance of travel achieved nothing productive; it was done just because they could. It was

part of the thrill of exercising power, the only purpose of which is power itself. There was some requirement for passports in the Civil War era, but my favorite children's author, traveler Arthur Ransome, noted in his autobiography that prior to 1914, one "could wander pretty well anywhere in Europe" without a passport, Czarist Russia excepted - so after Lincoln we can blame the Czar for starting it all. Then in that year all those governments had themselves a big war (for no particular reason, as Forrest Gump might have said) and in wartime it's important to prevent spies crossing borders, so passports were mandated, and once the laws were in place they never got repealed - that was the nature of laws. Not until E-Day, that is; and even then they weren't repealed exactly - they just became unenforceable when all government employees here had walked off the job.

So, since in that year all the silly border posts and customs barriers fell into disuse for want of anyone to operate them, anyone can come to America who wishes to do so, for any peaceful reason - and if his reason is *not* peaceful, he gets handled the same way as any other aggressor, few though they are. Naturally, he pays his own way - and he pays it in gold, for nobody accepts payment in the form of any government's paper - so he's welcomed as a buyer of our goods and services, or as a provider of labor or merchandise at attractive rates. If he's unable to trade in such ways and runs out of gold, he returns home; for of course there is no government welfare here and though charities help out in exceptional cases, they use their funds efficiently and see to it that no welcome is overstayed. All that is straightforward, predictable and predicted.

The tricky bit came - again, as predicted - when Americans wanted to visit overseas, for business or pleasure. We have no passports issued by any extant

government, so the question arose: shall we find a welcome?

Initially, the answer everywhere was in the negative. All governments have enormous inertia; if the paperwork isn't just as the clerks are drilled to find, the visitor is turned away - and their political bosses were and are scared stiff (with excellent reason) that something similar to the fate of government here will befall them too. So they viewed Americans like aliens.

That lasted about four months. Then, each of those foreign economies was hurting, because of the reduced trade with America, by far the biggest market for their goods as well as the biggest supplier of the merchandise and spare parts they needed. Clearly, all but the biggest of them had to reverse course and welcome Americans back - and the first to do so were the governments in the islands to our South, starting with Cuba. The Caribbean has long depended on the tourist trade, and pretty soon ads were popping up all over the Net saying "Come on down again, mon" and "Americans welcome - no papers needed." They wanted our gold, and I don't blame them. In such ways is our new-found freedom being exported.

Most foreign governments have now followed that lead, and trade with foreigners is brisk again, though games with paper money on credit are of course no longer played. The rule is that of cash on the barrel head, and it's much healthier. The steady flow of Mexicans heading North in search of work has slowed to a trickle because of the large adjustments to our domestic labor market already in process, due to so many former government employees needing work, and because at long last the Mexican economy is in danger of collapse for want of labor; the former surplus has changed into a shortage so wage rates

are actually rising - albeit in paper pesos. A final factor is that the Spanish version of the Academy has attracted a fast-growing number of Mexicans and their own "E-Day" cannot be far off now, and the people are gaining a sense of that and want to be around for the *liberación*.

Our **mode of travel** is changing gradually. All the usual ones are still used, of course, but since E-Day as I've mentioned before in this book, a fast-growing industry has been that of personal aircraft. Flying them is very easy thanks to the abundance of triplicated safety and automatic-pilot systems on board, and the market is exploding - so those slow trips to the airport and tiresome check-in procedures are on the way out (the repulsive TSA scrutiny that began in 2001 ended, of course, on E-Day) because we can now simply climb aboard our personal helicopters, press a few buttons, and fly anywhere. They are *really* smart; they won't obey a command to fly into heavy weather or towards another nearby aircraft, nor will they fly out of range of gas stations! Instead, friendly reminders appear on-screen to remind the driver what to do. For long journeys the airlines are still used of course, but the old bugaboo of a hijacking danger has not resurfaced since most of them not just allow but encourage passengers to bring handguns on board. More than that, the *motive* for making mayhem in the air has disappeared since there's no longer a government to aggravate Islamic or other malcontents with its foreign policy.

I reported in Chapter 5 that a few well-heeled travelers visited the Moon this year, but here on *terra firma* one new popular, summer **destination of travel** has become Greenland, for average global temperatures are now 0.3°F higher than when the big "Global Warming" scare was drummed up a quarter century ago, and - as predicted -

that has caused the useful melting of a little ice. The result is that for the first time in twelve centuries, Greenland has begun to live up to its name; I had long supposed the Viking founders named it with irony, but it's not so. It really was green then, at least near the coast, and now it's green there again - so resorts are being built, minerals have been found and are being mined, and some spectacular scenery, concealed for a millennium, is being enjoyed. By the way, that warming never related to anything mankind had done and was indifferent to all that governments did to try to stop it; all that happened was a huge mis-allocation of resources. (No surprise there; *everything* governments spent was mis-allocated, because the optimal spending decision is *always* made by the owner of the money, since it's *his* money.) Now, however, the growing season in the former Northern States is noticeably longer and American farmers are profiting from harvests even more abundant than usual.

The **fuel for travel** remains primarily gasoline, for it is the most efficient in terms of power/price, power/weight and power/volume ratios. Plug-in electric cars are useful for some commuters, and hybrid cars such as appeared early in the Century have retained a market share, though after the initial taxpayer subsidies were withdrawn they stopped gaining more. The price of gas has not increased (in terms of gold, of course) but after government and its taxes evaporated it fell, to around 30 milligrams today, making it easier for those less well off to travel more - which is stimulating the road, rail and hotel businesses. There was a significant shift towards nuclear as well as coal, wind, wave, geothermal and solar energy sourcing during the last quarter century as they became less costly compared to oil, so a lot less oil is now consumed for other purposes, for example to generate electricity; hence there is no shortage of gasoline for cars. Europeans are still paying

the equivalent of 250 milligrams a gallon including their 475% taxes, and so are fast turning green - but green with envy, no longer with eco-fanaticism; and that all helps move the rest of the world to liberty. As Huber & Mills pointed out in "The Bottomless Well" as long ago as 2005, there is an abundance of energy in this Planet - all we have to do is exploit it to our best advantage; and for that, our free market society has no equal.

As for the **reasons to travel**, explorers have explored ever since a rational inquisitiveness was reawakened in the Renaissance, and mankind has traveled ever since the first members of our species evolved in central Africa and migrated all over the world, forming as they settled in its various regions the ethnic varieties we know; and Thomas Sowell's masterpiece "Migrations and Cultures" documents many of the more recent movements of populations in search of freedom and opportunity. One obscenity of recent governments was to have put obstacles in the way of further patterns of such travel, at the very time that technology had so dramatically reduced its cost - all the more obscenely on the part of American ones, given that in this country, uniquely, some from each of those ethnic groups have come together again for the very same reasons their ancestors originally separated. At least in our case, and I think very shortly the whole world will follow our lead, that outrage has now ended. People are, once again - as our nature demands - on the move; to visit, to explore, to find a better life, to enjoy the marvels of nature, to wonder at the vast majesty of the universe - and just to have fun with the kids.

Freedom includes the freedom to travel, and the pleasure of that freedom is now ours.

11. Leisure

In our new, free society work itself is a pleasure, for nobody is forced to do work he doesn't enjoy. There is ample opportunity to form one's own business, for example, if working for someone else doesn't appeal - and plenty of *mobility* of jobs as we saw in Chapter 5 - so far since E-Day, if anything there's been rather too much for comfort. It's quietening down now.

In fact, there are those who choose to work very little, earning just enough to live on but not to wallow in luxury; to them, "luxury" is to maximize leisure time, so they might work just ten hours a week or so. The rest of it, they do what most do at weekends and there is so much to explore and enjoy, that to them that lifestyle is wealthy - as we noted in Chapter 6, wealth means different things to different folk. They may not contribute much to the harder measures of society's wealth like GDP, but they enrich it anyway, for anyone fulfilled in his own life is a plus for everyone. Additionally, such people seem to come up with more by way of art and poetry than anyone else, and that too is enriching to all.

The old-world pattern summed up in the acronym "TGIF" applies today much less; variety is good, so nobody complains when the work week ends, but work is not the drudgery it used to be so the contrast with weekends is not so great; the line between work and leisure has been blurred. That said, what do we do for fun?

We travel, as noted in Chapter 10, and much more readily than before - and we play sports, or watch them, and tend gardens and smarten homes, and attend concerts and plays

- much as in the old world, only more so. By "more so" I mean that we have learned, in the Academy and while awaiting E-Day, to value our time more highly and spend it with more thought than we used to. I'd say that a lot less time is wasted - there are many fewer "couch potatoes" than there used to be.

There is another reason for that: we've been helped along by **technology**. Ever since before this Century began, that arch-waster of time, television, has been losing its grip thanks to alternative entertainment delivery modes. Not only did DVDs and game systems proliferate, the Internet came in to very widespread use at that time, with downloadable movies and other entertainment as well as the well-known huge variety of comment on the news and as the massive resource it provides for all kinds of education (including the Academy itself) and knowledge. Result: plain-vanilla TV lost audience, and with that it lost paying advertisers, and with that the traditional broadcasters lost funds with which to produce quality programs and with that they lost more audience... it was a virtuous spiral. Couch springs gained a lot of relief, and pro-government TV propagandists lost a lot of clout. Today there are none, of course, and I've met no mourners. By the same token the appalling amount of time lost in watching mindless TV advertising (the clever and funny ones, like Aflac's, were all too rare) has been saved and is being put to good use; it was about 30% of every viewing hour, so anyone glued to the Boob Tube for four hours a day was frittering away 36 hours of his life every month. That time is now valued; if it were all used to do something productive (it's not) it would in theory represent on its own a $(36/167 =)$ 21% boost to our economy!

Preferences among different **sports** have shifted, and I

think they will shift further. Again because we value our own lives more highly and seriously, we tend to favor individual sports more than team ones. There's also a move away from violent contact sports like boxing and football, towards others like tennis and soccer, where the physical punishment is taken more by the respective bags of air than by the players' persons. Semi-industrial sports with vast salaries for key players are less central to American life than they used to be, in part because they had attained the status of a religion and nowadays religions are not held in high regard - as we'll see in Chapter 12. In addition, large stadiums with which city governments would build their prestige are no longer funded with stolen money, and there are no taxpayer-funded college "scholarships" for those whose only talents are on the football field. So the scope of those sports has been trimmed back somewhat; they will be all the healthier for standing on their own financial feet, being funded only voluntarily by paying spectators. The ancient practice by which governments distracted attention from their own grotesque misdeeds by entertaining the populace with mass-spectator sports (the Roman version has been called "Bread and Circuses" and the remains of those circular arenas can be visited all around the Mediterranean) has now also ended - and if a player breaks the rules of his sport association by shooting up steroids, he no longer has to account for it to Congress.

The trend towards individual sport has also brought a growing interest in backpacking and in one of my favorites, which the English call "fell walking" - a "fell" being any seriously hilly area short of precipitous mountain cliffs. America has an abundance of open country (most of it, formerly "owned" by government) and the new owners have almost always allowed visitors to wander through and camp if they wish, because (a) the

cost of excluding them is so high, given the lot size and (b) welcome-visitor signs convey goodwill and enhance the owner's reputation, which as we've seen, is his primary asset. Naturally, such notices remind the visitor that he will be held responsible for any damage caused; and some are.

The sport of shooting regained a keen following as E-Day approached, though by 2020 it had become very hard to get a license, even to own a rifle; fortunately the gun-owner lobbies managed to get exceptions for sport shooting on ranges so there were plenty of people able to control a gun and after E-Day millions more joined them by snapping up the bargains put on the market when police and military personnel walked off the job. There's been a very brisk trade in pistol-training, and now almost everyone is well armed and able to shoot straight, for defense as well as sport, as noted in Chapter 7. It's one of the reasons that aggression is so rare.

My personal favorite sport is sailing, though when my bones began to creak with age I had to curtail it a little; and I'm pleased to report that since even before E-Day there has been a resurgence of interest in harnessing the wind instead of combustion. Yes, water-skiing is still very popular and for that one needs a boat with serious horsepower, but there is something about matching wits with Nature in a sailboat that blends beautifully with the ideal of freedom, and America abounds with lakes and broad rivers on which the young can and do learn the art of using the wind. Dinghy and windsurfer sales are booming, and a few years hence I expect to see those of larger, cabin craft follow suit. As part of the same trend, I think, learning to fly gliders (regular as well as hang) is also becoming very popular again; mankind's ancient yearning to fly "free as a bird" has a lot to do with it now

that everyone so highly values the other kinds of freedom we enjoy.

Music is a marvelous way to spend some leisure time - playing it when feasible and appreciating it when not. It comes as ever in a wide variety of styles, but - again consistently with the less frivolous outlook on life we have now that we're free and responsible - "classical" music is now more popular than it ever was before and the rich heritage of masterworks on CD, and on-demand via the Net, is gracing more and more living rooms. Music alone, it's said, is "never to die" and the great mystery of why and how the human mind interacts with it, from every language group and culture, is ever more intriguing.

All in all, then, the big change to how we use our leisure time in this new society has to do with its *quality*. We've learned that life is valuable and that the world is packed full of interesting things to do and to explore and enjoy, and because life is also short we've got busy enjoying it with all deliberate speed. "Just hanging out" for want of something to do is a thing of the past.

12. Religion

I hope you've enjoyed the reports in this book so far, and although they are rightly very upbeat I hope you also agree they included "warts and all" - that they came without unjustified bias. If so, I also hope you'll be hungry and thirsting to help make it happen. Of course, with the benefit of time-warped hindsight, I know you did.

All those hopes are mentioned because this last report will disappoint a number of readers. I'm sorry about it, but - to coin a phrase - that's the way it is. It will represent, for some, a large additional wart. And first, I crave your patience for a preamble.

Anyone who knows what a free-market society is can also see that it works wonderfully *but only if everyone understands it and wants it*. By "everyone" I don't mean there must be literally zero practitioners of initiated force, but that their number be so small that our ordinary, efficient, competitive justice industry (see Chapter 7) can handle the residue; that is, that they number no more than around 1%.

The need for understanding and desire could be verified easily during the Governed Era. Suppose that a magic wand abolished government tomorrow morning at 9 am; imagine what exactly could prevent its re-establishment at some time before 5 pm. The public, being wholly ignorant and helpless, would holler and whine for it and pols would crawl out of the woodwork to oblige. So: universal desire for liberty is indispensable, and the prerequisite for desire is understanding, and the prerequisite for understanding is universal education about the philosophy and practice of

freedom. Any program (such as a political platform that promised "freedom") was doomed absolutely unless it included that universal, in-depth re-education, which it never did. Such education is *necessary* - but it is also, happily, entirely *sufficient*.

That much was clear before schools like TOLFA appeared, or should have been. Now, the nature of that re-education started with the rational understanding of what human beings are and what government is, by their core nature in each case. This required that every student base his life on **reason** above all. Once those questions are addressed and answered rationally, the only society compatible with human nature is easily seen to be one without government; so rational thought is indispensable to freedom - and fortunately, rational thought is an activity of which every human being is capable. Okay, end of lengthy preamble!

So, rational thought leads quickly to acceptance of anarchism, but it also leads to acceptance of atheism; and so we come to the subject of religion. Just as government is an obvious myth when examined rationally, so is god an obvious myth when examined rationally; and it's not consistent to accept the one conclusion on rational grounds without also accepting the other on rational grounds. It's not that religion is important or that atheism is a prerequisite for living free - not at all; rather, rational thought is most certainly a prerequisite for living free and rational thought leads also (and incidentally, if you will) to atheism.

Even so, a lot of good people eager to rid society of the scourge of government, believed in God. Further, the very essence of "freedom" is that everyone is free to do and believe whatever he wishes, in and with his own life - so it

is obviously impossible to have a society that is free, and yet which prohibits religion! These are the logical difficulties that needed to be overcome.

Here's how it has worked out, and first: *nobody* in the new, free America is told what to believe and not to believe.

In the process of learning the indispensable habit of thinking only in rational, economic terms, virtually everyone came (rightly) to see that traditional religions were as absurd, irrational and dangerous as government - indeed, that they are "two vultures from the same egg." There were however exceptions; some exercised their rational faculties regarding the latter, but suspended them regarding the former. I can't explain this, I merely reflect sadly on the power of superstition. These folk continue to attend church and to embrace the story that there is a creator (who lacks both a crisp definition and any theory about who created *him*) who (out of all his billions and billions of stars and planets) interested himself in one particular species on this particular rock; who is said to be "good" yet created that species with the capacity to choose to do "evil" which he also created (since, allegedly, nothing exists that he did not create) but then blames people for choosing it; and who took human form by a virgin birth (!) and underwent death and resurrection. It's a tale that has MYTH written all over it in giant letters, but they go on believing it anyway. In this new, free, rational society they persist in worshiping an imaginary deity who allegedly (see Romans 13:1 and Titus 3:1) *appoints governments* - entities that have always practiced far more evil than all others combined - to *suppress wrongdoing!* This is all evident in their Internet profiles (something they don't mind) so anyone poised to do business with them takes it in to account. No doubt some shy away, wondering that if they can be that irrational and eccentric,

how can they be trusted to honor a contract? - but others take the view that church folk are as honest as the day is long and as pleasant and kindly as they come - so it comes out for them in the wash. It's beyond me to account for such glaring contradictions, but as long as these folk don't aggress - and they don't - there is no problem.

For the most part, however, religion has been dumped. In the early years of this Century there was supposed to be a large minority of believers, in America - by some counts, a majority. In reality this included a great deal of fluff. Actual, regular church attendance never did exceed 20% of the population after 1950, and of those only about a fifth of those seriously embraced the doctrines involved - the rest just enjoyed the pleasant company and comforting liturgies and dropped such beliefs as they had, when they learned how to think rationally and take back their own lives, and to build them on rational ethics instead of superstition. So the "hard core" described above never amounted to more than about 4% of the population and much of that has melted away. Since they are non-aggressive, they blend in well enough.

Did the abandonment of formal religion lead to some kind of psychological "hole" in life? - not a bit of it. On the contrary, the rational understanding in the case of every person that he or she is the sole, sovereign owner of his own life was absolutely thrilling and liberating, and formed the mainspring of the urgent desire to experience it in practice! It was (for nearly everyone) by no means difficult to shed the superstition that we are really owned by some invisible, inaudible, intangible deity - any more so than to shed the superstition that we owe some allegiance to an invisible, inaudible, intangible state. Far from causing a hole or deficiency in our self-esteem, it has all wonderfully repaired holes and deficiencies - we are

now whole human beings and are not afraid to explore our inner beings along with all else that this marvelous life has to offer.

There's plenty of meditation going on, as part of that endless and fascinating exploration. Quiet contemplation of the wonders of nature and of one's own person has replaced religion, for many people - and the contemplation of someone else's needs is what replaced "prayer" - in fact, a few still call it prayer. Prayer was never proved to have changed the prayee one iota - but it can certainly have a beneficial effect on the prayor, by focusing his thoughts and perhaps leading to an idea for achieving himself the objective desired. This all increases the general benevolence in society and so does it good and helps enhance its peace.

Peace, justice, prosperity, health, knowledge, self-fulfillment - these are features of our society in Free America; and they all stem from freedom, or self ownership. Urgently seek freedom, you folk back in 2024, and those other, priceless attributes will become yours.

See you soon!

Post Script: Reality

As the Foreword to this book makes clear, its "Vision of Liberty" has been a work of imagination. As it also makes clear, however, its forecasts are based upon assumptions formed by *reason*. I therefore do believe that something close to what you have read will actually take place, rather soon; that this book portrays the *real* future of humanity.

That belief has been challenged, in the years since TOLFA was launched. That Academy is, for sure, the best way for turning this fiction into that reality (and the reader is again encouraged to join it; preferably by asking a friend who is a graduate, or else by visiting www.tolfa.us.) If other academies supplement it in the course of time, they will need to use a very similar growth model.

Here in the final chapter those challenges are identified, and answered. The reader will therefore be able to judge: are these answers good, and so will the vision of this book turn into reality?

"Humans are not rational."

This challenges the very basis of TOLFA: if no more than a few human beings in America can apply their minds rationally to the logic the Academy presents, then it cannot succeed and the number of its graduates will not much increase and this "Vision of Liberty" will be no more than a dream. So, we are considering a key attribute of humanity: does it exist, or not?

I argue that it certainly does exist, in everyone - though admittedly, more in some than in others and with the rare

exceptions of some who are, sadly, born with less than the normal complement of mental equipment just as some are born without limbs. Those apart, *homo sapiens* is rational, and is therefore always capable of reasoning.

My bases for this belief are twofold.

(1) Uniquely among all known species, as noted in the Foreword, mankind reasons his way through any challenge or dilemma and has in a mere 100,000 years taken primates from the jungle to the Moon. Every artifact by which we are daily surrounded is testament to the inventive, creative, rational nature of man. The very development of language itself, without which you, dear Reader, would see on this page nothing but a mass of strange squiggly marks, enables you to consider this very argument; the fact that you can reason about it is proof that you are rational. The very act of *denying* man's rationality uses rationality to reach its conclusion! (wrongly, but the process is rational in form.)

Certainly, humans have done many irrational things; most notably, while having at least some sense of our own self-ownership (who would not answer the question "Whose life is it, anyway?" with the emphatic reply "Mine!"?) are so amazingly irrational as to elect people to take away huge portions of that self-ownership right in practice - even when, time after time, the result has proven disastrous. Certainly, we are capable of being fooled; we fail always to check the premises or test the logic of some political con-artist who sets out to deceive us. So I concede that humans are not *uniformly* rational, that we are certainly capable of gross error. But at root, one of our prime attributes is the ability to reason - and we have that attribute to a degree unique in all of Nature.

(2) When dormant, it can be awoken. The real purpose of government "education" is, as shown in Chapter 4, to dumb down the student's ability to think rationally and independently - to absorb, instead, a world-view that allows government to continue enjoying its irrational existence. So yes, our rationality has very often been suppressed, put to sleep even; but that can be fixed. The On Line Freedom Academy is well placed to fix it.

A last point about this challenge or objection: if, *arguendo*, it were true then there is no hope whatever for the human race, and we might just as well eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow we shall certainly die; the world's governments have already built enough weapons of mass destruction to eradicate the human race several times over and if rationality does not prevail then sooner or later, deliberately or accidentally, one of them will use those weapons and all will be lost. If humans are not rational (ie, if this objection is valid) then the race is absolutely doomed, and *all* attempts to improve its lot in *any* way are a total waste. This answer alone does not mean the objection is false, of course; it just means that the objectors had better, so as to be consistent, abandon all their other pretenses to ameliorate the human condition.

"Human decisions are mostly emotional"

This challenge is mostly a re-statement of the first, and is not without truth. Emotion is certainly another attribute of human nature, and does quite often guide our decision making process. Few would marry a life-partner, for example, solely on the basis of logical analysis!

Its error is to suppose that it's exclusive - that humans make decisions *only* on the basis of emotion. That is

nonsense, and the remarks above should dismiss it.

That said, one purpose of this book is to excite some positive emotions in the reader about the delights of living free! There's nothing wrong with salivating, so long as the object in view fits well with reasoned analysis as well. Emotional desire is often the clincher in a buy decision, for example about the choice of a new car; reason can take us most of the way (the size, power, reliability and price factors all fit) but what tips the scales may be that luxurious polished-wood dashboard or the groovy aluminum wheels - factors which, to the next guy, might mean nothing at all but which in this case, trigger an emotional "yes!"

This book has portrayed the sheer pleasures of living free. Perhaps they too will trigger an emotional "yes!"

"People don't want to be free"

Very sad to say, there is truth in this one too. Responsibility always accompanies freedom, and people have been conditioned to fear responsibility and crave the warm, cozy protection of the womb or cradle. Ben Franklin held that "People willing to trade their freedom for temporary security deserve neither and will lose both" and he was dead right. We have.

However, "wanting" or not wanting to be free is a desire, and desires change in the light of new knowledge. A young boy, for example, has no particular interest in girls and may even say he thinks they're "yucky"; a few short years later his understanding and knowledge change completely and his desires on the subject undergo a total inversion.

Similarly, many people don't wish to live in freedom because they don't understand what it's all about; their desires are formed by their ignorance. When that ignorance is dispelled, their desires change radically. Dispelling that ignorance is one purpose of this book, and certainly of the Freedom Academy. To the extent that this objection is valid, therefore, it is irrelevant.

"It's too simple"

I've never actually heard this one, but am fairly sure it lurks under the surface of the minds of some critics. For a quarter of a billion Americans to undergo a thorough, in-depth re-education at no cost exceeding pocket change (eg for CDs) is so radical a departure from the array of the horribly expensive political campaigns and heavily-funded think-tanks that have characterized all libertarian efforts for the past half-century is, I must admit, a bit hard to swallow. Doesn't it mean that all those honest and dedicated endeavors were a total waste?

It certainly does not. On the contrary, most of them were *indispensable!* Without the books and magazines and web sites and brilliant intellectual effort that most of them continue to provide, this book and the Academy which it accompanies would never have seen the light of day. Even the political Libertarian Party served such a purpose, for it brought this author and very many fine people to a realization of which way is up. It has abjectly failed in its political purpose, but that's not to denigrate that fact. To the extent that this book perceives a clear "vision of liberty" it's because the author stands on those very tall shoulders.

I hope they all continue, so that Academy students will be able to deepen and round out their understanding of freedom by having something wholesome to read while awaiting E-Day. But if they don't, no matter; they are neither indispensable nor sufficient. If they were sufficient, by now they would have succeeded, and manifestly they have not succeeded; the march of government towards total elimination of freedom accelerates unchecked. Further, they *must* fail, for a free zero-government society cannot exist until *all* its members understand and desire one, and not a single one of those admirable ventures has even a plan to re-educate the entire society, nor any mechanism in place to achieve it.

So, yes: of course it's simple. Nothing complex or expensive could possibly do the job.

Notes

On the “**Back Cover**”, the “262 million” refers to the work of the late Professor R J Rummel. He estimated that that many *civilian* deaths were caused by governments in the 20th Century, in addition to battle deaths, and he called the process “democide.”. His web site continues at www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/

[2] Mr Gatto's web site is at www.johntaylorgatto.com/ and his book “Dumbing Us Down” is a must-read.

[3] For information about the \$2,200 Tata Nano, see an evaluation at www.marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/01/10/tata_nano/?refid=6 Assumed: \$30/gold gram.

[4] For an account of justice in mediæval Iceland, see “Viking Age Iceland” by Jesse Byock, Penguin Books

[5] It's possible that the worldwide demand for gold after E-Day will increase so dramatically that, indeed, its purchasing power will rise to a degree never seen in history. Rothbard was right; that does not matter - except that the price examples given in this book will be far too high.

For Further Reading

For a New Liberty by Murray Rothbard

The Machinery of Freedom by David Friedman

The Market for Liberty by Morris & Linda Tannehill

I Must Speak Out by Carl Watner